Exploring Mentoring Programmes and Different Forms of Peer Support for Female Offenders:

A Qualitative Study in Prison and the Community

Melissa Henderson

THESIS

PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

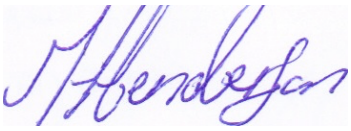
ROYAL HOLLOWAY

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

2017

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Melissa Henderson, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: 

Date: 21/09/2017

ABSTRACT

Within a criminal justice context, this qualitative study provides an empirical exploration of women's experiences of mentoring programmes. The research investigates mentoring as a form of contemporary rehabilitation intervention in two separate forms: firstly, peer mentoring programmes within prison and secondly, 'through-the-gate' non-peer mentoring schemes within a community setting, undertaken by either paid workers or volunteers. The research adopts a gendered framework with a central focus on understanding the distinct needs and experiences of women in the context of supporting rehabilitation efforts and eventual desistance. Particular focus is given to the concept of the developing mentoring relationship, both between peer mentors in prison and mentors in the community, in order to explore the potential influence of relational factors in supporting changing behaviours and coping mechanisms.

Research interviews were conducted at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, England's sole privately operated, women-only prison, and in community-based organisations that offered mentoring for female ex-prisoners. Eighteen women in prison were interviewed: thirteen 'peer mentors' and five 'mentees'. Seven interviews were then conducted with mentors in the community. The interviews explored the basic practices and principles of mentoring programmes, the perceived impact of mentoring on female criminogenic needs, and the significance of relational dynamics on moving towards rehabilitation and reform. The overall research findings highlighted the disparities within the provision of mentoring services, both within prison peer programmes and community organisations. The accounts of peer mentors were indicative of the programme being more impactful for mentors rather than mentees, who were remarked as having developed improved self-confidence and were working towards a more 'pro-social' identity by conforming to a role in which they were 'valued'. On the whole, mentoring within the prison was seen as a promising intervention that was improperly implemented, with the label of 'mentor' affixed to a variety of roles and positions, and the creation of power imbalances and risk-taking behaviours as a consequence of inadequate supervision and management by prison staff. The accounts provided by the participants in prison and the community also emphasised the significance of relational elements to the programme, reinforcing the need for a positive, holistic approach to female offender interventions. Following the outcomes of the research, the study concludes with recommendations for future policy

and practicing of mentoring programmes, suggesting three key objectives; clearer information within the prison about the role of mentoring in order to recruit wider participation; further directive, robust training within the prison and community to establish a more streamlined intervention; and finally the requirement for a joined-up service between prison-based peer programmes and those that operate 'through the gate', in order to provide supportive, continuous care that targets women's needs effectively and facilitates both rehabilitation and resettlement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Undertaking this thesis has been an immense, and highly rewarding, challenge. However it would not have been possible without a number of significant people.

Firstly to my supervisors at Royal Holloway; the greatest thanks to Professor Rosie Meek for her continuous guidance, reassurance and academic insight throughout these past four years, for helping to develop my passion for prison research, and for making my place at Royal Holloway possible from the beginning. To Dr Serena Wright, for the huge effort and time you have put in to helping me through the hardest stages of the thesis, your advice and words of encouragement have helped immensely. I would also like to mention Professor Michelle Burman and Professor Fergus McNeill, both of whom encouraged my academic development and sparked my interest in the research topic during my postgraduate study. I would also like to thank Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe and Professor Nick Hardwick for being such supportive examiners of this thesis.

Sincerest thanks to the prison staff at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, all of whom were incredibly welcoming, helpful and encouraging of my research. I am also extremely thankful to the women who participated in the research from each community centre, whose passion and commitment to improving the lives of the women they worked with helped to make this research feel worthwhile.

I am hugely thankful to my loving and generous parents, Valerie and David, who have encouraged and supported me at every stage of my academic career and who continue to do so much for me. Your belief in my abilities has helped me to achieve all that I have. Thanks as well to my grandparents, Norma and Joe, for always being proud of my academic endeavours and my brothers, Ryan and Andrew, for always being just a phone call away when I need them. To my oldest friends, Olivia and Gwen, for listening to me talk about this PhD for the past four years and for all your encouragement along the way, and for Leah and of course Dot, for being a great distraction when needed. To my sister Caitlin, my best friend and biggest cheerleader, for her endless encouragement, advice and support always. Thanks especially to my partner-in-crime Ana, for your friendship from day one and your amazing support throughout the last four years, I could not have done this without you.

Thanks and love to Jack – for everything you do for me. Your constant reassurance, encouragement and infinite patience throughout the highs and lows of completing the hardest stage of this thesis have been invaluable.

Finally, my utmost gratitude to the women of Bronzefield prison, who shared with me their experiences, fears and hopes for the future, and without who this research would not have been possible.

This thesis is dedicated to Olive, my feminist inspiration and dearly loved grandmother, who I hope I would have made proud.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

This study explores how mentoring programmes can be used for women, both whilst incarcerated and post release, and looks to determine whether this form of service can have a positive impact for women in the criminal justice system when properly implemented in prison-based interventions and community resettlement programmes. Despite a growing interest in the use of mentoring within the criminal justice sector, there is still an absence of in-depth research regarding core aspects of such programmes, both in terms of how these are conducted and organised, as well as in relation to their perceived impact. A clear understanding of the definition of 'mentoring' is still yet to be clarified, and as a result of this, a range of working definitions are adopted in practice across a wide variety of settings. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the current conceptions and adaptations of mentoring within a criminal justice framework. The chapter then moves on to the specific focus of the study, while clarifying the objectives and research questions, and then the reasoning for the methodological approach taken. Finally, an overview of the thesis structure is outlined.

During a particular period of economic uncertainty, the Coalition government in the United Kingdom wholly supported the efforts of mentoring as a means to reduce persisting issues of repeat offending. In June 2013, a new scheme to reduce reoffending included the allocation of a mentor to all individuals serving less than 12 months on release from prison under the Offender Rehabilitation Bill (Ministry of Justice, 2013). This proposal was part of the subsequent Transforming Rehabilitation programme, which was introduced in 2013 as a collective agenda to change the way in which offender treatment was dealt with on release and to 'make progress in driving down reoffending rates' (Ministry of Justice, 2013b: 6). Under this reform, 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) were formed to target services for low to medium risk offenders[1], as well as the creation of a new National Probation Service and, most recently, the

[1] From February 2015, the CRCs were transferred to eight providers, predominantly located away from centralised governance and in the hands of private sector providers.

publication of a White Paper on Prison Safety and Reform[2] aimed to create a safer penal environment for both prisoners and staff. Alongside these new efforts at reform was the creation of a system of Payment by Results (PbR) whereby service providers were required to work '*successfully'* with offenders, and would only receive payment for services rendered by meeting measurable goals and objectives in relation to reducing recidivism rates (Ministry of Justice, 2013b: 15). In respect of this thesis' focus on the use of mentoring schemes in the community, the implementation of PbR creates further restrictions to the provision of successful services for women and risks detracting from the positive outcomes this form of intervention can provide.

Following the Transforming Rehabilitation proposals, the Ministry of Justice published a set of 'strategic objectives' related solely to women in the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2013c). These announced the creation of an Advisory Board for female offenders with objectives including the provision of greater community-based sentencing, enhanced service provisions in the third sector and a 'tailored' approach to women's estates in order to meet 'gender specific standards' (Annison, Brayford and Deering, 2015: 27). However, despite this apparent overhaul of offender management, Annison *et al* highlight the limited focus on women beyond this, and argue that these changes fail to commit fully in any real sense to the proposals set out by Baroness Corston's 2007 report for more of an 'individualised, intensive, needs-based approach' for women in criminal justice settings (Annison *et al*, 2015: 23)

With these policies serving as a backdrop to the current situation for rehabilitation efforts for women, there is a real need to examine the ways in which mentoring in criminal justice settings - particularly for women – are constructed and experienced in the wake of these formal restrictions, and whether this influences their ability to meet the female specific needs.

[2] Ministry of Justice (2016), Prison Safety and Reform, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565014/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-_web_.pdf

1.1. Mentoring in the context of the criminal justice system

> *'Mentoring is one of those bright ideas that take a periodic grip on the imagination of the policy community. Everyone appreciates that one learns from experience and so much the better if one can trade on the wisdom of others'*
>
> (Pawson, 2004; x)

The concept of mentoring is well established within areas of professional development and education, and is now widely used within a youth justice context, but is only more recently becoming a popular development within rehabilitation services for adult offenders (Buck *et al,* 2015). Traditional mentoring approaches were initially established in the United States, as a response to issues of social marginalisation and welfare, where Newburn and Shiner (2006) state that mentoring was offered as a solution to these problems and with the capacity of being able to offer 'great promise and almost limitless potential' (Newburn and Shiner, 2006: 24). Within a criminal justice context, mentoring programmes were initially developed to target the needs of young people and youth offending, but have more recently expanded out into all areas of criminal offending and work with vulnerable individuals (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2008). Aitken (2014) suggests that mentoring for offenders 'offers one of the most promising pathways to rehabilitation in today's criminal justice system' (Aitken, 2014: 7).

Despite the growing popularity of the use of mentoring programmes to target issues of reoffending and resettlement, a problematic element of mentoring is the lack of succinct definition in terms of the practice and principles of the programme and an understanding of how mentoring practices can best be employed. Jolliffe and Farrington (2008) offer a comprehensive explanation for how mentoring is used within criminal justice settings:

> *'Mentoring involves the exposure of an 'at risk' individual to another person… who acts as a positive role model in the hope that the mentor will*

provide guidance and support that would otherwise be unavailable to the individual being mentored (the mentee)' (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2008; 7).

As well as providing forms of practical, direct assistance, such as with education and housing, mentoring is also argued as being best placed to offer more indirect, emotive support, such as providing hope and encouragement (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2008). This definition of mentoring is used within this study as a framework for the way in which the mentoring programmes in HMP/YOI Bronzefield, as well as the participating community organisations were understood, with a core emphasis of the current research being to determine how this form of rehabilitation intervention is positioned to support the needs of female offenders. Following the research phase of the study it was determined that despite the current literature around peer mentoring suggesting it to be a role that was predominantly used to provide emotional support and guidance, in practice within the prison the term peer mentoring was regarded as more of a label affixed to different forms of practical assistance, such as within the classroom or reception area of the prison, with limited importance placed on establishing a connection or meaningful relationship. This meant that occasionally roles that were deemed to be mentoring positions were more in-line with assistant or support worker positions in the prison, which lead to some confusion about what role and responsibilities the peer mentors had.

As well as different understandings and definitions for mentoring as a practice, the function of the mentoring relationship is also complex in nature, encompassing a variety of dynamics depending on the situational context. For Anderson and Shannon (1988), mentoring functions as 'teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending' (Anderson and Shannon, 1988: 41), and this definition emphasises the multiple ways in which mentoring is understood and the different forms of accepted mentoring practice. In relation to mentoring within a criminal justice capacity, the voluntary sector is the most common area of practice for mentoring in relation to rehabilitation measures. Following the publication of the *Corston Report* (Corston, 2007) a larger focus was given to the use of women's centres and 'one-stop shops' in particular, as a

means to offer women-only provision, advocating a personalised, holistic approach to supporting women (Plechowicz, 2015).

This study looks to explore not just these forms of mentoring programmes in the community, but also peer programmes based inside prison, offering an insight into how these forms of intervention are managed at both key stages of a women's journey in the criminal justice system. In relation to peer support specifically, the majority of research around this form of programme is in relation to peer mentoring in education and as a form of prison health service. South *et al* (2016) describe peer interventions as being based on 'the principle of homophily', whereby individuals in similar situations are able to share experiences in the purpose of achieving a specific goal (South *et al*, 2016: 5). Devilly and colleagues (2005) suggest that such programmes can offer a positive role model figure to fellow prisoners, and provide a meaningful role for the mentor to engage in (Devilly *et al*, 2005). However, despite this increased awareness of the benefits of peer mentoring, there are limited studies that focus on the impact of mentoring for women in prison and even fewer that look to understand the implementation of the programme in both a carceral and community setting. This study contributes to this lack of knowledge by providing first-hand, empirical research of mentoring, and being mentored, in a penal context.

1.2. Why focus on women

It is important to provide a rationale as to why the thesis looks at the experiences of women specifically. It is widely accepted that Carol Smart's (1976) *Women, Crime and Criminology,* presents as a pioneering article addressing the complexities around discussions of women in criminology. This was subsequently followed by a succession of significant articles addressing the concerns for women's experiences of imprisonment, sentencing length and overall treatment within the criminal justice system, which served to highlight a move towards more specialised approaches to meeting the distinct criminogenic needs of female offenders (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988; Morash, Bynum and

Koons, 1998; Covington and Bloom, 2006; Worrall and Gelsthorpe, 2009). Following a harrowing number of suicides at HMP Styal during 2002 – 2003, the development of Baroness Jean Corston's report (2007), *A Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System,* called for a greater acknowledgement of the influence of wider social issues that impacted on women's criminal behaviour (Annison and Brayford, 2015). The report outlined the need for a 'distinct radically different, visibly-led, strategic, proportionate, holistic, women-centred, integrated approach' to working with female offenders (Corston, 2007: 9). As discussed by Annison and Brayford (2015), the *Corston Report* (2007) identified three key areas of vulnerability for women;

- 'Domestic circumstances', relating to issues of domestic violence and problems with childcare.
- 'Personal circumstances', such as mental health problems, substance misuse and low self-worth.
- 'Socioeconomic factors', such as poverty, unemployment and housing issues (Annison and Brayford, 2015: 3).

Prior to the publication of this report, several other organisations, such as the Prison Reform Trust (2000) and the Fawcett Society (2004) specifically, had indicated the need for a more robust approach in order to meet the requirements of a 'women-centred' approach to service provision. When constructing this research, these specific areas of need were taken into account when looking to determine whether mentoring programmes were able to offer support to women in prison and on release.

1.3. The focus of the study

This thesis takes a focused look at peer-led and community-based peer mentoring programmes and the first-hand experiences of how they impact on women in the criminal justice system. The research pays particular attention to the distinct nature of the peer mentor and mentee relationship and the extent to which this is understood to impact on attitudes to offending behaviour and changing self-identity. As well as addressing the previously unknown dynamics

of peer mentoring and community mentoring for women, this thesis also seeks to address the perceived impact of mentoring programmes on the desistance process.

This thesis is original in its focus on mentoring programmes both within prison and the community for female offenders specifically, whilst also incorporating a sociological study of the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship in relation to desistance theory. As a result of this, the study intended to address a gap in the literature surrounding the ability of mentoring programmes to support the key processes inherent to desistance for women.

This thesis was designed to offer an empirical insight into the experience of mentoring for women, in prison and the community, by addressing the following objectives:

- To specify a comprehensive understanding of the practices and principles of mentoring programmes for female offenders, both within the community and through peer-led programmes in prison;
- To examine the type of relationship that develops between peer mentor and mentee, and the perceived impact this relationship has in relation to the desistance process;
- To determine to what extent mentoring programmes are in-line with key principles of desistance from crime;
- To explore the overall outcomes and perceived benefits or drawbacks mentoring can have, and whether mentoring is positioned to meet female offenders distinct social and emotional needs.

In order to comment on these specific aims and objectives of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How is mentoring, for women in prison and on release in the community, organised and conducted? What are the underlying principles of the mentoring practice that influence the approach?

2. What are the perceived impacts of the mentoring relationship? How is this relationship understood and described by both mentor and mentee? Is a 'growth-fostering' relationship capable of developing?

3. Can mentoring be regarded as being able to meet women's criminogenic needs, and how? What are the potential challenges or limitations of mentoring programmes, both within a prison setting and the community?

The study adopted a multi-perspective approach involving a period of empirical data collection with mentors in the community, either employed or acting in a volunteer capacity, as well as women in prison who were either mentors, or being mentored (hereafter referred to as 'mentees'). The interviews comprised of 18 women in prison, 13 mentors and 5 mentees, all of who were involved in a form of mentoring programme at the time of the study. A further 7 mentors based in the community were also interviewed in order to gain a greater understanding of how the programmes conducted in the community differed from those in the prison and how both programmes were positioned to meet women's criminogenic needs.

1. 3. The outline of the thesis

The thesis is comprised of eight chapters, beginning with a critical overview of the current theoretical understanding of female offending behaviour and what is known about women's pathways into and out of crime. The study then moves on to provide an overview of the current research around desistance from crime and whether this is a distinct process for women. A more focused look is given to what is currently understood by rehabilitation methods for female offenders and the need for gender responsive services; ones that highlight the need for understanding offending behaviour based primarily on female experience as well as proposing interventions that are specifically designed for women (Hannah-Moffatt and Shaw, 2003). The literature around mentoring being used as a form of rehabilitation programme within a criminal justice context is then discussed

more broadly, before moving on to looking at how mentoring programmes are used within a custodial setting. The literature review then moves on to look at the significance of applying components of relational theory to an understanding of the mentoring relationship, as well as highlighting the centrality of social bonds for female offender rehabilitation and as a key factory of the desistance process.

The method of data collection and analysis is discussed within Chapter Three, explaining how fieldwork was undertaken and the rationale for the research methodology. The chapter offers an in-depth account of the dynamics of undertaking research in a custodial setting before moving on to discuss the research undertaken within the third sector with mentors in the community. A brief, reflexive account of undertaking research in as a woman in a female prison is given, along with a number of personal research diary extracts, in order to provide a richer insight into the research process as well as the experience of both volunteering and researching women in a criminal justice context.

The study comprises four findings chapters. Chapter Four provides an overview of the practicalities of mentoring projects, addressing how mentoring is undertaken in the prison and community and the inherent values and perceived principles of practice. The data within this chapter also offers an insight into the mentors' perceptions of the practicalities of a mentoring programme, specifically in terms of what is involved in training and agency support, in order to sufficiently manage and maintain the intervention. This was thought to be critical due to the limited number of current studies around this topic that offer an insight into mentoring for female offenders specifically, as well as the need for credible support when targeting a cohort of women with distinct vulnerabilities.

In Chapter Five, a more theoretical analysis is given to the understanding of the type of relationship that develops between mentors and mentees. The development and substance of the relationship is regarded as significant due to the accepted importance of close relationships for women. Gelsthorpe and colleagues (2007) state that 'personal support is likely to be as important [for

women] as any direct input addressing offending behaviour' (Gelsthorpe *et al,* 2007: 8). The chapter also offers an update to the literature around the creation of 'pseudo-families' and gendered identities for women in prison, suggesting that this previously accepted understanding of familial role-playing fails to capture the complexities and nuances of mentoring relationships. Crucially, by focusing on the nature of the mentoring relationship, this chapter draws together the key precepts of desistance theory and considers whether mentoring is able to act as a catalyst for this process, in relation to fostering a new, positive identity and changing attitudes to criminal behaviours.

Chapter Six addresses the research questions concerning the perceived impact of mentoring programmes within both a prison and a community setting. It is now widely recognised that women tend to have distinct 'criminogenic needs' (Hedderman, 2004: 241) in comparison to their male counterparts due to their different routes into offending (Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2007: 18), the study therefore aimed to determine whether these female-specific needs could be addressed in part through mentoring initiatives. The areas targeted by mentoring interventions are explored under the two broader categories of 'emotional support' and 'practical support', in order to determine whether mentoring programmes have the capacity to encourage work towards producing long-term change for women, both within prison and upon release.

The final findings and discussion chapter, Chapter Seven, engages with the research data as a whole, outlining the findings that indicate specific challenges and limitations that are still evident within mentoring programmes as they are currently utilised within HMP/YOI Bronzefield and within third sector organisations. The difficulties of implementing peer mentoring and community mentoring programmes is addressed and analysed against the context of the wider issues of 'what works' for women in the criminal justice system. Issues of re-traumatisation, risk-taking behaviour and abuse of power are all highlighted as key concerns related to mentoring in prison, whilst ineffective training and lack of clarity about practice are explored as significant issues within the mentoring programmes in community organisations.

The concluding chapter brings together the core research findings in order to meet the identified objectives, answering the overarching question of how useful mentoring as a form of rehabilitation intervention can be from the perspectives of women in the criminal justice system. It also draws out two overarching themes, power dynamics and forms of identity, as key elements inherent to mentoring programmes. The research findings address whether a significant connection can be determined between forms of mentoring and the desistance process for women, effectively adding to the current literature around 'what works' for female rehabilitation. The chapter concludes by situating mentoring in relation to current policy and practice, as well as suggesting directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Prior to undertaking empirical research, it was necessary to consider the large body of theoretical and conceptual work that is focused on drawing out and clarifying gendered differences in pathways into crime, offending behavioural patterns and experiences of rehabilitation. This chapter will begin with a focus on understanding female offender routes into crime and the interaction of gender in female crime and rehabilitation. Following this, an overview of mentoring programmes and practices will be discussed in order to locate how this form of support can meet the needs of vulnerable women. Finally, this chapter will review the significance of relationships and relational theory with regard to female offenders, providing a framework for the study's investigation of the relationship between peer mentor and mentee and how this can influence desistance from crime.

Despite the research being undertaken in a prison located in England, it was felt that a cross-cultural approach was necessary when reviewing the literature on mentoring and peer mentoring in the criminal justice system. This was mainly due to the scarcity of significant UK-based studies that included mentoring for women specifically, and due to the popularity of the use of mentoring and peer mentoring in the USA. By discussing the use of mentoring in American and New Zealand studies, (such as the Brown and Ross study from 2010), the establishment and growth of mentoring as a significant rehabilitation programme in a criminal justice setting can be more widely understood. As this study is focused on female offending and rehabilitation, it is necessary to first introduce the literature and theory surrounding female criminality in order to elicit a better understanding of how to address issues specific to female offenders.

2.1. A gendered focus on women

A review of previous literature surrounding female criminality and distinct, criminogenic needs is provided before focusing on this study's objectives. A large body of research has documented that female offending behaviour differs significantly from that of their male counterparts, in both the type of crime they are involved in and the level of severity of their offending behaviour (Belknapp, 2007; Bloom *et al*, 2003; Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2008). Further, it is not only the experience of offending which can be demarcated along gendered lines, but also the *pathways into* – and indeed *out* of – offending and engagement with the criminal justice system (Daly, 1992; Corston, 2007).

2.1.1. Female pathways into crime

Before exploring how mentoring programmes could potentially influence female desistance from crime, it is necessary to consider the ways in which women are drawn into criminal behaviour in the first instance.

Daly's (1992, 1994) 'pathways perspective' identified a number of specific routes into crime for women, which she argued were distinct from those of male offenders (Daly, 1992). This perspective proposes that gender is a key variable, with marked differences between men and women's lives helping to structure patterns of criminality and deviance (Bloom *et al*, 2003; Steffensmeier and Allen, 1998). Through Daly's research of eighty qualitative biographies of forty men and forty women facing felony charges, five distinctive pathways for women in relation to crime were seen to emerge; (i) *street woman;* (ii*) harmed and harming women;* (iii) *drug-connected women;* (iv) *battered women* and (v) *other women (*Daly, 1992*),* later termed *economically motivated women* (Golladay and Holtfreter, 2014: 193). These various routes into different forms of offending behaviour highlight specifically the nature of economic poverty as a key characteristic in relation to female offending behaviour, suggesting that financial pressures may force women to commit crime in order to survive (Daly, 1992; Cobbina, 2009; Steffensmeier, 1993). This body of work has subsequently led to

substantial changes in relation to gender-responsive policies and practices, specifically in the areas of 'classification, treatment and programming' for women (Golladay and Holtfreter, 2014: 192). This position – that women have distinct routes into offending and prison – is one which subsequent studies and policy (e.g. Richie, 1996; Bloom *et al*, 2003; Corston, 2007; Huebner *et al*, 2009) have repeatedly drawn attention to. Subsequent research, built on the groundwork of Daly's (1992) studies, highlights further routes into crime for women (Brennan *et al,* 2012) as well the recommendations highlighted by the Corston report (Corston, 2007), which has subsequently led to a more concentrated effort to recognise the previously 'gender-neutral' understandings of offender resettlement.

A core aspect of recognising the 'distinct' nature of women's experience is the growing acknowledgement of the occurrence and impact of 'trauma, substance abuse, dysfunctional relationships and mental illness' (Wright *et al*, 2007: 310) within the life histories of many women in the criminal justice system (Richie, 1996; Pollock, 1998; Dougherty, 1998; Bloom *et al*, 2002). For example, women in prison are more likely to have experienced sexual abuse, intimate partner violence and victimisation because of their gender, a factor that is disproportionately related to their offending (Belknapp, 2007; Hollin and Palmer, 2006; Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2008). Recent research collated by the Prison Reform Trust indicates that 46 per cent of women in prison are reported to have experienced a history of domestic abuse, with 53 per cent experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child; this is compared to just over a quarter (27 per cent) of men in prison (The Bromley Briefings, 2014). A large body of literature surrounding female criminality suggests that these accounts of violence, prior victimisation, offending, and consequent imprisonment are all interrelated (Belknapp, 2007). These high levels of victimisation and violence by intimate partners or family highlights the importance of relationships for women's routes into crime; as a significant number of women are either coerced, introduced or forced into delinquent behaviour as a consequence of close relationships (Corston, 2007).

Substance misuse is another pathway into crime that is particularly prominent for female offenders: results from a Ministry of Justice study on women offenders (2009) indicated that 24 per cent of female offenders had a drug abuse problem linked to offending, whilst 27 per cent reported to currently have some form of serious drug use (Ministry of Justice, 2009). Women are also seen to be more likely to be introduced to drug-taking by intimate male partners and subsequently commit crime as a means to finance addiction; this route to crime is therefore gendered in that a higher number of women are more likely than men to resort to criminal behaviour in relation to drug use (Covington, 2002; Bloom *et al*, 2003; McIvor, 2007). This notion highlights the significance of relationships for female offenders, as many women are introduced to criminal behaviour through intimate partners or family members (Bloom *et al,* 2003).

Mental health disorders are another problem for a high number of women in the criminal justice system. Up to 80 per cent of women in prison have a diagnosable mental health problem, whilst women in custody are five times more likely to experience mental health issues than women in the general population (Ministry of Justice, 2009). Subsequently, the detrimental impact of prison on women's mental health often means that for those women who did not have mental health problems or substance addiction before entering prison, are highly likely to struggle with these issues on release (van Olphen *et al*, 2009). These statistics reaffirm the idea that women have considerable difficulties prior to, during, and after release from prison, indicating the need for holistic treatment that takes into account these kinds of problems (an issue which is discussed in further detail below). As a consequence of these differences for men and women, it is crucial to develop gender-sensitive treatments and services for women in the criminal justice system that addresses the social and economic difficulties the majority of female offenders have faced (Bloom et al, 2002; Corston, 2007).

As well as influencing pathways *into* crime, gender is also a key variable in terms of the type of crimes committed. Women are less likely to be convicted of serious violent crime and more commonly commit minor property crimes and substance abuse offences (Covington and Bloom, 2006). In 2015, 80 per cent of offences

committed by women were for shoplifting (Ministry of Justice, 2016a), with more women convicted for crimes of theft than for robbery, violence against the person, sexual offences, drugs, fraud and motoring offences combined (Ministry of Justice, 2016b). Statistics from Prison Reform Trust (2017) indicate that 84 per cent of sentenced women in England and Wales were convicted for non-violent offences, in comparison to 76 per cent of male prisoners (Prison Reform Trust, 2017). Women are also more likely than men to commit crimes to fund drug addiction, and are recorded as having more severe substance-abuse backgrounds, with more frequent drug use and the use of hard drugs (Covington, 2001). Relationships also play a significant role in female offending, with 48 per cent of women questioned by the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey stating they had committed their offence in support of another individuals drug use, in comparison to 22 per cent of men surveyed (Light *et al*, 2013). Covington reiterates this idea, stating that for the majority of women pathways to crime are based on 'survival… and substance abuse' (Covington, 2001: 128).

2.1.2. Female criminogenic needs

In order to determine the success of community-based interventions for women and peer mentoring support in prisons, it is important to establish how these programmes target women's distinct criminogenic needs. Andrews and Bonta's (1994) 'risk-needs' approach has been regarded as highly influential at directing research into criminal behaviour (Andrews and Bonta, 1994; Hollin and Palmer, 2006). This model views criminal behaviour as 'the outcome of an interaction between certain situational and personal factors,' which consequently increases the risk of crime (Hollin and Palmer, 2006: 180). Andrews and Bonta (1994) clarify the concept of criminogenic need as the following:

> 'The need principle draws our attention to the distinction between criminogenic and noncriminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are a subset of an offender's risk level. They are the dynamic attributes of an

> offender that, when changed, are associated with changes in the probability of recidivism' (176).

In order to effectively reduce reoffending, treatment practices must therefore target these needs (Andrews and Bonta, 1994). Within the risk-needs model, the offender's criminogenic needs are specific risk factors related to the overall possibility of their reoffending. Hollin and Palmer (2006) identify 'static' and 'dynamic' needs; with static needs relating to a past event that is unchangeable, whilst dynamic needs relate to a current situation and are able to be altered (Hollin and Palmer, 2006: 180). Targeting these needs that fall into the later category is seen as crucial in helping to reduce the likelihood of future recidivism.

Whilst men and women have similar criminogenic needs, such as family, employment and substance abuse, women are regarded as also having additional, distinct needs (Blanchette, 2001). Factors often associated as 'women-specific' crime-related needs are problems with self-esteem, victimisation and self-harm (Blanchette, 2001). Criminogenic needs are therefore able to reduce reoffending, for example through strong social connections and family ties. However, they are also able to make recidivism more likely, as many women fail to deal with issues of substance abuse and low self-esteem effectively, as such these needs can consequently propel and influence criminal behaviour.

A study by Knapp and colleagues (2012) looked to examine the impact of risk factors in predicting criminal recidivism for both male and female offenders. Their results conclude that although gender differences were found in relation to criminogenic needs, all risk factors were both 'positively and significantly' related to recidivism for both men and women, with 'emotional difficulties' being a more principal factor in predicting female recidivism (Knapp *et al,* 2012). Although it is argued that men and women's needs overlap, similarity in need does not always suggest they affect men and women to the same degree (Hollin and Palmer, 2006; Knapp *et al,* 2012). Hollin and Palmer (2006) state that whilst

men and women may experience similar needs, the women-specific needs may not be best understood by using measures developed primarily from research with males (Hollin and Palmer, 2006: 187). This reinforces the need to understand the distinct pathways for women in and out of crime in order to establish how life events and psychological variables interact. This could consequently assist in laying a foundation to advance gender-specific approaches to helping women refrain from reoffending and move towards desistance (Hollin and Palmer, 2006). In relation to this idea, my study aims to understand how mentoring, as a female-focused rehabilitation strategy, is conducted and whether mentoring programmes are well placed to meet distinct female needs, both whilst incarcerated and through the gate.

2.1.3. Developing 'gender-sensitive' approaches

Recent responses to working with women offenders in England and Wales have been restructured to focus specifically on responding to women's distinct needs and incorporating a gender-sensitive approach, leading to the current growth of community-based interventions for women (Gelsthorpe, 2011). Gender specific programmes for female offenders became increasingly popular following the 1992 accreditation of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (Belknap, 2011). Katherine van Wormer labels these 'gender-sensitive' approaches as 'policies and intervention that take into account girls' and women's special needs by 'virtue of their gender' (van Wormer, 2010: 16). This approach acknowledges women's distinct pathways into crime and addresses specific social and cultural factors, emphasising self-efficacy and a 'strength-based' approach to rehabilitative treatment (Bloom *et al,* 2004). Gelsthorpe (2011) suggests these responses are a consequence of key changes in legislation as well as increasing awareness of the needs of women in the criminal justice system; the growing number of women sentenced during the 1990s and early 2000s (Home Office, 2007) led to concern over addressing female social and personal needs, as well as the creation of the Women's Offending Reduction Programme in 2004, which raised further issues about addressing women's requirements (Gelsthorpe, 2011). The 'gender duty' aspect of the Equality Act

(2006) also brought attention to equality issues with women and highlighted the requirement to focus on 'what works' for women in sentencing, Gelsthorpe comments that 'equality of treatment need not be equated with the same treatment' (Gelsthorpe, 2011: 127). The creation of the National Offender Management Service, which came into being in 2004 after being proposed in the Carter Report (Carter, 2003), as well as the publication of *The Corston Report* in 2007, was also significant in highlighting concerns over the treatment of vulnerable women in the criminal justice system, as well as generating the need for greater links with the third sector and working with women in the community (Belknap, 2011; Gelsthorpe, 2011).

Prior to the commissioning of the Corston Report, significant investments were made into the establishment of 'radical new approaches' (Home Office, 2005) to help reduce female offending and specifically target women's needs. These community services function as one-stop-shops; women-only provisions developed by the Together Women project in collaboration with probation services (Gelsthorpe *et al,* 2007) and in-line with recommendations made by Baroness Corston's Corston Report (2007), which advocated for the recognition of women's particular vulnerabilities. This move towards enhanced community supervision and support for women was also inspired by the work of 'Time Out' centres (Loucks *et al*, 2006: 1) such as the 218 Project in Glasgow. This centre was established in order to offer alternatives to custody for women with substance misuse, and was designed as a means to help reduce reoffending and, subsequently, the number of women entering prison (Loucks *et al,* 2006; Roberts, 2010). The outcomes of this set up demonstrated positive results in addressing the needs of women, indicating a significant decrease in alcohol use (83 per cent of women) as well as improved health and well-being (67 per cent of women) (Loucks *et al*, 2006; 80).

The Asha Centre in Worcester offers another example of 'good practice' (Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2012: 213). The Centre operates by providing resources and practical support for vulnerable or disadvantaged women in order to help improve socioeconomic problems they may be experiencing and to identify

potential resources of support (Roberts, 2010; Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2012). The Centre operated as a 'woman only' space, creating a safe environment for women who may have previously experienced forms of sexual and physical abuse perpetrated by men (Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2012). As with the 218 Project, the evaluations of the Asha Centre offered examples of positive outcomes for the women involved, indicating that those who completed the programme had fewer instances of reconviction during a two-year period than in comparison to other services (Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2012).

Recent research by Radcliffe and Hunter (2014) discusses the development of these kinds of Women's Community Services (WCSs) in England and Wales in 2009 as an initiative within the voluntary sector, aimed to 'reimagine penal provision for women offenders in the community' (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2014: 3). They argue that WCSs are able to meet a gap in provision for female offenders by providing a new means to access a range of social capital opportunities that are not usually provided by general community service provisions (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2014). Brown and Ross (2010) state that this development of social capital, or 'connectedness', is a 'key dimension of desistance' (p. 31).

2.1.4. What is 'desistance', and is it different for women?

As with the use of mentoring programmes within the criminal justice system, the relatively new field of desistance research is continuing to gain traction as a significant way to understand the concepts underpinning individual attempts to refrain from criminal behaviour (van Ginneken and Hart, 2017). Desistance is understood to be an on-going and continuous process rather than a single event (Maruna, 2001; McNeil and Whyte, 2007), and essentially defines the action of an individual abstaining from offending (Weaver and McNeill, 2007). Desistance is regarded as falling into two distinct categories; primary desistance, which is seen as any 'lull or crime-free' gap in offending; and secondary desistance, which describes the more definitive move from non-offending behaviour to the assumed identity of 'non-offender' (Weaver and McNeill, 2007: 2). Therefore when analysing the impact of mentoring programmes, the degree to which they

are able to influence longer-term, secondary desistance is of most significance, in particular with regard to the influence of mentoring on encouraging a changing offender identity. As with a number of classical criminology concepts, there are limited studies that focus on desistance for female offenders specifically (Farrall *et al*, 2007), despite the likelihood that accepted theories of desistance for men cannot simply be applied to the experiences of women (Gelsthorpe and Wright, 2016). As discussed previously, due to the differences faced by women in relation to pathways in, and out, of crime, an understanding of female desistance from crime specifically is required.

Standard theories of desistance for male offenders highlight the importance of significant attachment, be it to another individual or credible employment, and romantic relationships as key factors in the desistance process (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Although the importance of relationships is applicable to women, this theory is usually discussed in relation to men due to the perceived significance of marital bonds and 'the love of a good woman' on their efforts to desist from crime (Maruna, 1997; 3). In a more contemporary study, Paternoster and Busway (2009) explain desistance in relation to identity theory, suggesting that changing behaviour that moves towards a more pro-social identity is a gradual process and is seen to occur when 'perceived failures and dissatisfactions within different domains of life become connected' as well as when 'current failures become linked with anticipated future failures' (p. 1105). This theory proposes that this changing identity, the emergence of a new 'possible self', occurs when an individual is able to recognise and identify the kind of person they want to be and is subsequently motivated to change their behaviour in order to achieve this goal identity (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2015; Kerrison, Bachman and Paternoster, 2016). The study's focus on whether mentoring is able to guide and inspire change is subsequently based on this supposed link between identity theory and the desistance process, and the ability for pro social influences to spark this kind of transformation.

These so called 'turning points' in the life course of an individual are regarded as a catalyst for more 'long-term behavioural change' (Laub and Sampson, 2003:

149) through the provision of pro-social attachments and support, providing structure and encouraging positive behavioural changes (Lebel *et al,* 2008). This significance of meaningful connections as an instigator for change brings into focus the rational for the studies emphasis on social bonds and the creation of the mentoring relationship. The importance of social bonds, in both a positive and negative sense for women, is explored in greater detail further on within this chapter.

Farrall and colleagues (2007) have discussed the limited theoretical work that currently exists in relation to desistance theory for female offenders. In applying the popular concept of the impact of marriage and strong bonds to the notions of female desistance, it is suggested that a focus on the '*quality*' of partnerships and marriage for women is able to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of these connections (Wyse, Harding and Morenoff, 2014). For Kerrison, Bachman and Paternoster (2016), previous desistance studies that have also looked at the experiences of women have failed to give enough attention to the impact of 'maturity and agency', suggesting a need to include this in re-entry programme design, they suggest; 'it could prove helpful to design re-entry programming that was somewhat age specific so that women leaving prison later in life would not be mixed with those who still believe themselves infallible' (p. 25). McIvor and colleagues (2004) had previously attempted to bring women into focus through a discussion of how desistance is different for women, and girls, in comparison to men. Their research suggest that a key aspect of desistance for women is the importance of moral, as opposed to functional, rationales and the importance of the 'relational aspects' in ceasing offending (McIvor *et al*, 2004: 194). They continue by highlighting the significance of 'socially disapproving attitudes' that are seen to exist in relation to female offending; 'women are judged not only in terms of the criminal act itself but also in accordance with their family, sexual and interpersonal relationships' (McIvor *et al*, 2004; 195). This finding suggests that not only is women's offending impacted by gender, but their experience of desistance is also influenced by social constructions of what is understood to be acceptable female behaviour.

2.1.5. A gendered approach to working with women

Steffensmeier and Allan (1996) suggest that traditional 'gender-neutral' theories, whilst effective in explaining differences with regard to less serious male and female offending, fall short in detailing how the differences faced by men and women influence the 'type, frequency and context' of male and female offending behaviour (Steffensmeier and Allan, 1996: 476). A gendered-approach to dealing with women in the criminal justice system has recently become more widely adopted, as greater effort is made to adopt gender-responsive policies, programmes and services for vulnerable female offenders (Covington and Bloom, 2006). This idea was also championed by *The Corston Report* (2007) which emphasised the need for a 'woman-centred approach' when dealing with vulnerable women and community-based programmes that are both holistic and individualised (The Corston Report, 2007: 61). This approach looks to put women-specific needs at the centre of any actions or programmes that aim to assist women in and out of prison. This term is seen as distinct from a more 'gender-sensitive' approach to interventions, which instead takes into account the notion that there are gendered differences for the experiences of men and women in the criminal justice system.

Whilst it is important to note the significance of taking women in the criminal justice system into account as a distinct cohort from male offenders, the adoption of a 'women-centred' approach has also been critiqued as failing to recognise the full extent of socioeconomic difficulties women face. It is argued that a gendered-approach fails to account for the need for specific structural changes to the prison environment, as there are currently limited opportunities for women to be empowered in a traditionally masculine setting of a prison (Zaitzow and Thomas, 2003). Hannah-Moffat (1995) states that this term 'women-centred' is arguably difficult to define in practice;

> 'The definition and constitution of a woman-centred regime is trouble-some for the following reasons; It relies on the problematic category of

> 'woman'; it is insensitive to wider social, economic, political and cultural relations of power; it sets up a false dichotomy between the woman-centred and male-centred regimes; and it denies the legal and material realities of imprisonment' (36).

With this critique in mind, the study moves away from programmes that advocate a women-centred approach, and instead suggests the possible strengths of a *gender-responsive* model of intervention.

This approach has been born out of the move away from previous 'gender neutral' theories that address the risk or need factors for both male and female offenders (such as antisocial peers, substance abuse, education and housing) towards more 'gender responsive' programmes for women (Brennan *et al*, 2012: 1482). Steffensmeier and Allan (1996) suggest that in order for this approach to be successful, four key elements are necessary and need to be taken into consideration: first, the 'organisation of gender' should be recognised, referring to gendered customs, identities and institutions, and the way in which this organisation influences and shapes criminal behaviour by both men and women (Steffensmeier and Allan, 1996: 474). Secondly, the gender differences in the context of offending are also crucial; women are much less likely to commit serious violent crime or be involved in criminal groups (Daly, 1994; Schwartz and Steffensmeier, 2008). Thirdly, as mentioned previously, women's pathways into crime are often highly diverse in comparison to male offenders; for females, more indistinct boundaries exist between victim and victimisation, women offenders also often have higher rates of substance misuse, previous histories of sexual and physical abuse and greater economic marginalisation (Daly, 1998).

Finally, this perspective should encompass the extent to which gender differences are derived from social, cultural and biological factors (Steffensmeier and Allan, 1996). One of the central aims of this study is to reveal whether mentoring programmes adopt a woman-centred approach that is in keeping with these key elements, and whether this influences the success of mentoring as a form of rehabilitation for women.

These rehabilitative practices must address both social factors and therapeutic intervention, providing a positive, holistic approach to offender treatment (Bloom and Covington, 2000; Bloom *et al,* 2002). Bloom and Covington (2000) offer specific guiding principles for a gender-responsive approach to working with women, emphasising the importance of these gendered differences when determining the most effective type of interventions (Bloom and Covington, 2000, Belknap, 2007). These gender-responsive strategies take into account the specific risk and need factors identified with women (such as abuse, trauma, parental issues), which are not as relevant in relation to male offending (Brennan *et al,* 2012).

Bloom and Covington (2000) stipulate that these gender-responsive services need to function under the following key principles; Firstly, recognition that gendered implications are prevalent throughout all aspects of the criminal justice system; 'the criminal justice field has been dominated by the rule of parity' (p. 4), and that these differences need to be acknowledged within service provisions. Secondly, the environment for women needs to be based on safety and respect, free from the elements of abuse that many women may have experienced, and one which 'reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives' (Bloom and Covington, 2000: 11). A women-only space is therefore regarded as crucial in order for women to feel safe on both a physical and emotional level (AVA and Agenda, 2017; Radcliffe *et al*, 2013). A third guiding principle is the development of programmes and practices that are relational and promote building connections to family and communities (Covington and Bloom, 2004; Gelsthorpe, 2011; Hollin and Palmer, 2006), although of course this might not be appropriate in all cases, with 53 per cent of women in prisons having experienced emotional, physical and sexual abuse during childhood (Ministry of Justice, 2012). Relationships are a key area of influence throughout the lives of female offenders, emphasising the importance of incorporating the role of relationships into all aspects of policy and programme for women (Covington and Bloom, 2004). The fourth guiding principle, as stated by Covington and Bloom (2004), proposes the need for

interventions that address problems of substance abuse, past trauma and mental health issues as a core part of supporting women in criminal justice settings, in order to effectively address women's criminogenic needs and influence their ability to successfully re-enter society (Covington and Bloom, 2006; Hollin and Palmer, 2006). Fifthly, interventions need to focus on attending to the socioeconomic disadvantages that women face, as previously set out in Daly's (1992) pathways perspective. Covington and Bloom (2004) suggest that providing women with improved educational and training opportunities can go a long way to improve their changes to support themselves (and often their children too).

Finally, the sixth guiding principle of a gender responsive approach to working with women states the need for 'comprehensive, collaborative services' (Covington and Bloom, 2004: 9) in order to provide women with much-needed community support, targeted to address their needs upon release. A 'wraparound' style of service is regarded as the most beneficial form, offering holistic support tailored to the needs of women. For Etheridge and Hubbard (2000) wraparound services can be understood as 'psychosocial services' that are able to 'facilitate access, improve retention and address client's co-occurring problems' (p. 1762). Oser and colleagues (2008) state that these services are most effective for women on release when they include health-related services such as the provision of medical care, counselling services and social support (Oser *et al,* 2008).

A 'strengths-based approach' is also proposed by several researchers as the most appropriate way to treat female offenders (Blanchette and Taylor, 2009: 1). This method, originally proposed by Van Wormer (2001), emphasises the need for offender strengths to be recognised rather than challenging their criminal behaviour, and integrating this technique into service provision (Blanchette and Taylor, 2009; Trotter *et al,* 2012). Those who advocate a strength-based approach claim that traditional ways of working with women in prison often fail to address the previous 'self-destructive behaviours' and 'oppressive societal ideologies' that are often a feature of incarcerated women's lives prior to coming

into contact with the criminal justice system (Mahoney and Daniel, 2006: 75). A strengths-based approach is therefore often regarded as highly significant when working with female offenders as it moves away from these earlier, constricting methods (Blanchette and Taylor, 2009; Trotter *et al,* 2012). Gelsthorpe (2011) suggests that developing these gender-appropriate conditions is a key prerequisite for promoting social inclusion, assisting offender reintegration and promoting desistance from criminal behaviour (Gelsthorpe, 2011). In reference to 'what works' with women, Gelsthorpe and Hedderman (2012) suggest there are nine lessons that are recognised as key prerequisites for effective provision of female offenders;

1. The need for interventions to be women-only to foster safety and a sense of community, and to enable staff to develop expertise in work with women;
2. Integrate offenders with non-offenders so as to normalise women offenders' experiences and facilitate a supportive environment for learning;
3. Foster women's empowerment so they gain sufficient self-esteem to directly engage in problem-solving themselves, and feel motivated to seek appropriate employment;
4. Utilise what is known about the effective learning styles with women;
5. Take a holistic and practical stance in helping women to address social problems which may be linked to their offending;
6. Facilitate links with mainstream agencies, especially health, debt advice and counselling;
7. Have capacity and flexibility to allow women to return for 'top ups' or continued support and development where required;
8. Ensure that women have a supportive milieu or mentor to whom they can turn when they have completed any offender-related programmes, since personal care is likely as important as any direct input addressing offending behaviour;
9. Provide women with practical help with transport and childcare so that they can maintain their involvement in the centre or programme.

(Gelsthorpe and Hedderman, 2012; 381).

The eighth recommendation specifically refers to the significance of the use of a mentor for assisting women with 'personal care', and the importance of this in relation to effective practice with female offenders. The recommendations also touch on other core conditions of a mentoring approach, specifically the need to 'foster women's empowerment' and to help women gain greater self-esteem and confidence (Gelsthorpe and Hedderman, 2012).

2.2. Mentoring programmes for rehabilitation

One of the key overarching ideas within this study is the capacity of mentoring programmes to be a contemporary and highly significant form of gender-focused rehabilitation intervention for female offenders. Before considering this idea further, it is necessary to look at what is meant by the term 'mentoring' in this context (including the differences between peer and non-peer based models), the origins of mentoring programmes and the underlying principles that dictate practice. Although limited, there are previous research studies that provide a strong basis from which this study can develop. This section of the literature review draws firstly on research that offers a more general overview of mentoring in the criminal justice sector, followed by studies that provide research on female-specific mentoring programmes, taking into account the significance of gender in relation to rehabilitation interventions.

The use of mentoring programmes has increased considerably during the last decade, so much so that Colley (2003) suggests it can now be described as 'a phenomenon in its own right' (Colley, 2003: 1). Mentoring is practised as a support technique in a range of fields, including education, healthcare and business organisations, and is becoming more widely utilised as a popular form of intervention within the criminal justice sector (Colley, 2003). Despite this increasing popularity within criminal justice, one of the key issues of mentoring is the lack of a definitive definition for the term. Most recently, in a publication

for The Centre for Social Justice, Jonathan Aitken effectively describes mentoring for offenders as,

> 'A voluntary relationship of engagement, encouragement and trust… To offer support, guidance and practical assistance to offenders in the vulnerable period around release. Its longer-term purpose is to help them find a stable lifestyle in which accommodation, employment, ties with family and friends, and a growing two-way relationship with the mentor, all play their part in preventing a return to re-offending. (Aitken, 2014: 11).

This description effectively encompasses the basic principles of the majority of mentoring programmes and highlights its potential for longer-term impact in relation to recidivism. The above quote also emphasises the need for the implementation of mentoring as a form of support in the 'period around release', a model that was not a part of the peer-based mentoring scheme within HMP/YOI Bronzefield.

Mentoring as an official response to problems of social exclusion or welfare issues originated in the USA during the 1970s and 1980s (Newburn *et al,* 2005), whilst mentoring in the UK criminal justice system was initially primarily used within youth justice, providing a supportive relationship with an adult role-model figure with an emphasis on fostering 'emotional, cognitive and psychological growth' (Ebay *et al*, 2008: 1). Through the development of an empathetic, trusting relationship between mentor and the offender, mentoring is regarded as being able to help facilitate improved self-esteem, health, motivation and increased self-confidence (Ebay *et al*, 2008; Mairs and Tolland, 2013). One of the first mentoring schemes to develop in the UK was the Dalston Youth Project (DYP) and the Big Brothers/Big Sisters UK during the late 1990s. The DYP, often regarded as one of the most successful programmes for youth mentoring in the UK, involved a programme of one year mentoring for 'at risk' young people, with an emphasis on personal development and improving education (Benioff, 1997). St-James Roberts *et al* (2005) carried out a study in

the UK evaluating the Youth Justice Board (YJB) mentoring schemes during 2001-2004 and found significant results for dictating best practice for mentoring programmes – females on a whole benefited more from mentoring than males, particularly when mentored by a female; mentoring relationships that were more prolonged brought about greater results and overall, mentored young people were more likely to enter education and/or employment (Roberts *et al,* 2005). With this in mind, my research study will look to explore how the basic underlying principles of these mentoring programmes with young offenders are applied to the mentoring rehabilitation treatment for female offenders, both in prison-based training programmes and community mentoring schemes for women.

In the context of the criminal justice system, Bouffard and Bergseth (2008) suggest mentoring is quite distinct from other aftercare and in-prison programmes in that it has a greater focus on role modelling, support provision and offender well-being rather than solely reducing recidivism (Bouffard and Bergseth, 2008). Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) refer to the practical aspects of mentoring and the role of the mentor in providing 'direct assistance and indirect support' as well as reducing opportunities for the offender to be exposed to 'delinquent networks' or influences (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2008: 7). Trotter (2011) suggests that the generally accepted view in mentoring literature is that it involves constructing a relationship with a volunteer worker, with regular, informal contact encouraging the most effective outcomes (Trotter, 2011). These programmes also comprise of 'behavioural-social learning intervention strategies', such as role-playing, reinforcement and behaviour modelling, as well as practical assistance to the mentee (Salgado *et al,* 2010). A recent evaluation of seven resettlement Pathfinders projects in England and Wales (Lewis *et al,* 2007) indicates the significance of using a mentor for offenders, with a number of those involved in the project stating that 'someone to talk to' or a mentor upon release from prison was as important as help with education and employment (Lewis *et al*, 2007: 47). The study also indicated that those prisoners who had contact post-release with voluntary mentors did considerably better than those

who did not, suggesting that mentoring can deliver a distinct provision of 'personal and emotional support' (Lewis *et al*, 2007: 47).

Despite the growing number of mentoring programmes in the UK, with over 200 registered mentoring organisations in England and Wales (justmentoring.org, 2013), there is still a limited degree of knowledge about the effectiveness of offender mentoring, particularly in relation to prison-based peer mentoring programmes with women specifically. Research by Brown and Ross (2010) was regarded as a key study in providing an explanation as to why mentoring, as a form of emotional and social support, can be so significant. The research provides an evaluation of a women's mentoring programme in Australia and highlights the correlation between mentoring programmes and the desistance process. This study was given particular weight during the literature review due to its distinct focus on the experience of women exclusively and recognition of the importance of establishing social connections and social capital through mentoring, two aspects that were crucial to my own research study. One of the key finding from the Brown and Ross study suggests that the social capital provided by mentors offered not only practical benefits but also evidenced 'trust and affirmation of their status as a person' (Brown and Ross, 2010: 43). The impact of mentoring was also thought to be critical in its ability to provide practice in positive relationship building and models of coping (Brown and Ross, 2010; Pollack, 2004). Despite evidence of successful applications of mentoring in a criminal justice context (eg. Lewis *et al,* 2007), there is an absence of research that explains how mentoring achieves its desired goals. Brown and Ross (2010) suggest that it still remains unclear whether the effects of mentoring practices 'flow from the benefits of the mentoring process itself, or whether that process is a way of acting upon something else' (p. 34). This lack of insight is particularly evident in relation to the application of the perceived benefits of mentoring within a prison setting, and secondly, the potential differences between peer and non-peer programmes.

However, the scant information that does exist suggests mentoring programmes to be valuable in promoting long-term desistance (Brown and Ross, 2010). A

recent evaluation by mentoring organisation SOVA (2013) indicated that there are a much lower number of female specific services for female offenders in comparison to male specific services. Whilst this is expected due to the much lower number of women within the criminal justice system, rising numbers of incarcerated women are cause for a refocus with respect to providing appropriate rehabilitative treatment (SOVA, 2013). Rising recidivism rates for female offenders are also a cause for concern, with 51 per cent of those women leaving prison in 2012 being reconvicted within a year (Prison Reform Trust, 2012). There is therefore a need for greater empirical research evidence on mentoring schemes in England and Wales in particular, which this study aims to provide. The study will also be original in its focus on the *nature* of the relationship that forms between the peer mentor and mentee and the perceived impact this can have on the desistance process for women post release. In this way, the research offers a contribution to contemporary literature around the impact of specific types of relationships for women in prison and the way in which desistance can be attributed to these forms of connections.

In relation to mentoring programmes carried out within the community, a wide range of literature has focused on the guiding principles of criminal interventions in an attempt to delineate exactly 'what works' with offenders (Trotter, 2011; Worrall and Gelsthorpe, 2009). Research by Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995, 2005) suggests that for mentoring offenders, the key to successful practice is an emphasis on the technique and procedure of the mentoring process, such as appropriate selection and matching of mentors and mentees, building a rapport, the formation of appropriate goals and understanding the changing mentoring relationship as it develops (Brown and Ross, 2010; Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005). Brown and Ross (2010) attempt to theorise the mentoring process, claiming that effectual mentoring programmes need to focus on and assess: individual needs of the offender, including their motivations to offend and change; the 'social context' of the offenders situation, with regards to social connections and support; and finally, the specific components of the mentoring relationship (Brown and Ross, 2010: 37). This study aims to fill a gap in empirical research on the mentoring

experience for women and focus on exploring whether these programmes are able to address and respond to these issues *in addition to* the 'women-specific' needs of the sort discussed above. The research will offer an original contribution to the evidence on 'women mentoring women' in criminal justice settings through the collection of empirical evidence from both volunteer and paid mentors in the community, as well as first-hand experiences from women delivering and receiving peer mentoring in prison. The study aims to provide an understanding of the nature of the female-to-female mentoring relationship and thereby help to inform how mentoring might promote desistance, however the conclusions in relation to desistance will be tentative.

2.2. 1. Life inside: peer mentoring in prison

'*For women in prison…women's behaviour need not to be seen as a 'symptom' of pathology, but rather as containing meaning, such as a reaction to arbitrary power plays or as a means of coping with feelings of powerlessness…'*

(Pollack, 2004: 699)

The concept of official peer-based schemes specifically focused on mentoring has become more widespread across the prison estate and regarded as an 'integral feature of prison life' (Woodall *et al*, 2015:1). In the last decade, the prominence of mentoring and befriending projects in the UK has grown dramatically, with an increasing number of peer interventions being developed in English prisons (Fletcher and Batty, 2012). A recent HMIP Peer Support Report (2016) for England and Wales defined the use of peer support as a 'formal system' (p.3) whereby prisoners are able to provide support to fellow prisoners. The conclusions from this report highlighted the need for appropriate training and risk assessments of peers, as well as implementing properly defined job roles for those in a peer mentoring position (HM Inspectorate Report, 2016). Another recent research briefing by South and colleagues (2015), focuses on the use of

peers in prison settings and sets out the range of different typologies of peer mentoring schemes and the way in which they are used in prisons in England and Wales.

Figure 1. Different forms of peer interventions currently operating in prison, England and Wales (South et al, 2015: 5)

Intervention mode	How this is used in prisons
Peer education	Communication and skills development between prisoners with the intention to increase knowledge and support healthy behaviours.
Peer support	Support provided and received by prisoners who have similar backgrounds or experiences, providing social and emotional support and practical assistance.
Listeners	Listeners are trained by the Samaritans organisation as part of a suicide prevention scheme, offering confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners.
Insiders	Volunteer peer support workers, who are able to provide practical assistance and information to new prisoners.
Peer Support Team (PST) programme	A Canadian model specifically for female prisoners who are able to provide one-to-one support for other women in an effort to develop self-esteem.
Prison Hospice volunteers	A USA-based scheme, where prison hospice volunteers provide social support and assistance for terminally ill prisoners.
Peer mentoring	This involves prisoners (or ex-prisoners) working individually with offenders to develop supportive relationships and act as role model figures, within prison and on release.
Health trainers	Working with prisoners around developing healthy lifestyles and in relation to mental health issues. This scheme is developed from

	the community-based health trainer model
Peer advisors	Provision of housing and benefits advice to prisoners, particularly those moving towards release and resettlement
Other intervention modes	Other interventions identified: Peer training (in violence reduction); Peer outreach (harm reduction); Peer counsellors (substance misuse); Peer observers (suicide prevention)

The above table indicates a multitude of uses of prison-based peer schemes that are currently in operation. Within the study, Bronzefield identified their peer programme as falling under the heading of 'peer mentoring' specifically, however they also ran a Listeners programme and incorporated other mentoring-style programmes, such as the Shannon Trust reading scheme.

One of the largest examples of this type of scheme is User Voice, an organisation that recruits individuals who have previously been in prison to provide collaboration between service users and providers in order to help support efforts to aid rehabilitation and reduce reoffending (User Voice, 2010). Other examples of such interventions include the 'Insiders' scheme, that operates in prison, offering advice to new arrivals, as well as the use of recovery mentors, resettlement 'champions' and peer housing advice schemes (Fletcher and Batty, 2012).

The Listener scheme is another well-known peer support scheme currently in use within a number of prisons. This programme was developed with the same ethos as the Samaritans organisation, offering prisoners a listening ear and confidential support in order to help manage their time in prison (Griffiths and Bailey, 2015). It has also been reported that the Listeners themselves benefit from the programme through the provision of a purposeful and meaningful role,

effectively helping to develop an individual's self-worth and an improved sense of identity (Perrin and Blagden, 2014).

The significance of in-prison support programmes – specifically those led by fellow prisoners, rather than by paid or volunteer non-peer mentors - is therefore regarded as a mutually beneficial means to aid daily life in custody and promote positive attitude and behavioural changes amongst prisoners. Within a custodial setting, peer programmes incorporate concepts of peer training, peer mentoring, education and modelling all delivered by prisoners to fellow inmates (Devilly *et al,* 2003; Parkin and McKeganey, 2000). However, as with the term mentoring, an absolute definition of *peer* mentoring is also difficult to define and is traditionally understood as involving mentors of either a similar age or background as their mentee. The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) offers another example of the way in which mentoring with a peer is conducted, identifying four key purposes of mentoring, which are regarded as the objectives of their mentoring and befriending project; specific or targeted help (for example in education or employment); changing behaviour (including improving relationships and reducing 'unwanted' behaviours); expanding opportunities (such as personal skills and confidence) and being supportive (with regard to building trust and reducing isolation) (MBF, 2011).

Peer-based support is often regarded by individuals at the receiving end of criminal justice interventions as being preferable to that of support offered by staff or external professionals, such as probation or psychologists (Blair, 2006). Peer mentors may be perceived as offering a more appropriate and accessible form of support for prisoners due to shared experiences and perspectives, as well as more specific knowledge relevant to their behaviour and needs (Devilly, 2005; Farrant and Levenson, 2002). Fletcher and Batty (2012) suggest that peer mentors essentially 'speak the same language and have walked in the same shoes' as the individuals they mentor (p.2). Peer mentors could therefore be regarded as effective 'identity models' in their ability to provide 'living proof' that the ability to refrain from criminal behaviour is possible (Fletcher and Batty, 2012: 3). Previous research surrounding prison-based peer support work

suggests that fellow peers have a greater ability to offer empathy than staff because of shared experiences and first-hand understanding (Devilly *et al*, 2005; HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016; Woodall *et al*, 2015). Prisoners also commented on feeling less judgement from confiding in a fellow prisoner and a greater level of confidentiality overall (Woodall *et al*, 2015; Foster, 2011; Farrant and Levenson, 2002). Cook and colleagues (2008) reaffirm this idea, suggesting that fellow prisoners were more efficient in establishing credibility and demonstrating an understanding of relevant problems in comparison to staff members (Cook *et al*, 2008).

Peer support is perceived to be easier and more convenient to access than external professionals, allowing for more immediate support and advice, as well as more informal levels of help (Woodall *et al*, 2015; Boudin and Weinstein, 2011). Other potential benefits of peer mentoring includes the provision of support in adjusting to the prison regime, reducing feelings of isolation, promoting healthy lifestyles and lowered levels of drug use (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016). In comparison to staff-led programmes, some previous studies have indicated that peer-led approaches are able to provide increased participant knowledge and communication skills, enhanced levels of confidence and self-esteem, improved interpersonal relationships and greater motivation in creating positive change (Devilly *et al*, 2005; Topping and Ehly, 1998).

There is additional evidence to suggest that peer mentoring not only benefits greatly the person being mentored (i.e. the mentee), but also the mentor themselves. Becoming a peer mentor in particular can positively impact on individuals, facilitating a sense of 'empowerment and fulfilment' that may perhaps have been previously sought through criminal behaviour, and which - perhaps with the exception of the prison Listener scheme - is inaccessible through other prison-based job roles (Devilly *et al*, 2005; Maruna, 2001; Turner and Shepherd, 1999). Peer mentoring offers prisoners a sense of pride through their 'legitimate contribution to the world' (Devilly *et al*, 2005: 231) resulting in feelings of greater self-confidence and self-esteem (Devilly *et al*, 2005; Backett-Milburn and Wilson, 2000). When offenders are put in a position to act as 'agents

of change', they are more likely to alter their own perceptions and beliefs surrounding offending behaviour due to their positions as role models for fellow prisoners (Devilly *et al*, 2005: 220). Work by Maruna (2001) reinforces this idea, suggesting that peer mentoring allows offenders to gain insight into what motivates their own offending behaviour through assisting mentees with their negative behaviours and attitudes, allowing them to become more effective mentors and help promote their own rehabilitation (Devilly *et al*, 2005; Maruna, 2001). This concept is also reflected in the NOMS Commissioning Intentions 2013-2014 Discussion Document (NOMS, 2012), with peer support being regarded as a significant method to reduce rates of reoffending through the provision of sufficient support systems to encourage a positive alternative to an 'offender' identity (NOMS, 2012). Peer programmes are also being promoted more actively because of perceived fiscal and organisational benefit – that is, peer-led programmes and mentoring allow for prison staff resources to be diverted to other areas, as well as being more cost effective than the employment of specialised staff, in the long-term (Fletcher and Batty, 2012; Devilly *et al*, 2005).

Despite the emerging trend, however, little empirical evidence from prisons in England and Wales exist to indicate how peer mentoring programmes are developed and utilised in a custodial setting or their overall impact and success rate, particularly with regards to the female prison estate (Woodall *et al*, 2015).
In fact, with regards to prison-based peer mentoring for women specifically, an American research study by Collica-Cox (2010) represents a relative anomaly. Collica-Cox looked at the impact of two HIV peer-support programmes on prisoners in New York State, suggesting that sufficient prison-based programmes have the ability to contribute to the development of 'pseudo-families' and aid 'positive social relationships' between female prisoners (Collica-Cox, 2010). These relationships were regarded as providing forms of emotional support as well as aiding coping mechanisms within the prison environment.

This study therefore looks to determine whether incorporating well-managed peer mentoring programmes into female prisons could assist in the creation of

'social capital', with pro-social networks and strong bonds seen to be essential for female offenders in reducing reoffending and successful reintegration upon release (Collica, 2010; Reisig et al, 2002).

Findings from the study indicated these health peer programmes assisted women to 'cultivate strong supportive relationships' and to form close bonds with each other whilst in prison, acting as parallel relationships to traditional familial roles through the provision of emotional and economic support (Collica-Cox, 2010: 341). The peer mentors in the programme were recognised as role models by fellow prisoners whilst staff encouraged these new, pro-social identities further. Whilst the prison environment can be both isolating and stressful for female offenders, these programmes and the subsequent relationships formed through them – which served as a healthy outlet for 'emotional release' - assisted to mediate the difficulties faced during incarceration (Collica-Cox, 2010: 342).

Despite the benefits of peer mentoring programmes outlined by previous studies, there is also literature exploring the possible *risks* of employing peer-based programming, particularly within a prison setting. Sufficient management of peer supporters by operational staff, for example, is essential in order for the programmes to run safely and effectively. Where peers operate informal mentoring with minimal staff oversight, this can lead to such individuals being over-worked and experiencing high levels of stress (HM Prison Inspectorate Report, 2016; Devilly *et al*, 2005), which reduces the time and energy they may have to focus on their own well-being and desistance plans. Discussing harrowing and distressing topics can also be particularly difficult for fellow prisoners to manage if they have experienced similar traumas, particularly if there is limited training and support provided by staff (Woodall *et al*, 2015; Dhaliwal and Harrower, 2009). Devilly and colleagues discuss this further, stating there to be 'three ethical concerns' with peer support delivery; *accountability, peer competence and confidentiality* (Devilly *et al*, 2005). These potential issues were also problems raised by prisoners as to why they may decide not to engage with a peer-based service, citing breaches of trust and

confidentiality as a primary concern (South *et al*, 2014). Another possible problem is the notion of over-reliance by prisoners on their peer mentors, particularly those who have provided support upon entering prison. Sufficient training around recognising and upholding the correct boundaries to the peer mentoring relationship is therefore essential (South et al, 2014).

Although there has been recent growth in peer led approaches across prisons in England and Wales, there is still limited insight into their effectiveness and overall outcomes (HM Prison Inspectorate Report, 2016), particularly with regard to female-focused research on peer led programmes in women's prisons. This research aims to contribute to the specific dearth in qualitative research surrounding the processes and perceived outcomes of peer mentoring schemes within a female prison establishment in England, in order to examine how such schemes are operating in practice, and what they might contribute towards, as well as determining whether correct implementation and practice could allow peer programmes to impact successfully on female offender management and rehabilitation for women.

2.2.2. Pathways out: community mentoring

Far more research exists to analyse the operation and impact of peer and non-peer mentoring programmes for women *outside* of prison, in community-based criminal justice settings. Research by Brown and Ross (2010), for example, analysed the impact of the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offender's (VACRO) Women's Mentoring Programme (2004) in Australia, a community-based service established to help women leaving prison by providing responsive, emotional and practical support from volunteer female mentors. Results from the study indicate the importance of the 'quality of the friendship' that was able to develop between mentor and mentee and the significance of family and social ties in aiding resettlement and desistance (Brown and Ross, 2010: 46). This previous literature therefore reinforces the significance of focusing on the type of relationship formulated between the mentor and service

user. My research will also be original in its provision of both the mentees and mentors viewpoint on the relationship, giving a deeper insight into how this relationship is perceived and can be influential for both parties.

Research by Trotter (2011) reinforces Brown and Ross's evaluation of the practical aspects of mentoring relationships and the influence they have for female offenders. Trotter also evaluated several mentoring programmes in Victoria, Australia, focusing on offenders' perceptions of how beneficial mentoring was 'by promoting individual change, developing healthy relationships, and also encouraging successful integration after release' (Trotter, 2011: 293). Trotter's (2011) research indicated that those involved in the mentoring programmes perceived them to be helpful in stopping them reoffending and also found the practical support received, with childcare appointments and financial queries, to be highly useful during their resettlement process, advocating a need for a 'seamless set of systems' starting within the prison and continuing through the gate (2011: 294).

Mentoring is therefore able to provide the women with practical help as well as the experience of a positive and trusting relationship, a key factor in their ability to change their behaviour, as Covington suggests, 'incarcerated women need to experience relationships that do not repeat their histories of loss, neglect and abuse' (Covington, 2002: 130). On a whole, the female offenders in the programmes commented on being more satisfied with mentoring services than their male counterparts, reinforcing the idea that the underlying principles of mentoring programmes are more successful in meeting female offender needs (Trotter, 2011). `

Closer to home, Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) carried out a rapid evidence assessment of mentoring and its impact on reoffending rates in a range of mentoring programmes based in England and Wales. This assessment in particular offered significant insight into the way mentoring was currently being used and provided a useful basis from which to begin my own research, emphasising the importance of focusing on the relational impacts of a mentoring

relationship. Jolliffe and Farrington's definition of peer mentoring was also the most relevant in relation to the way in which mentoring was interpreted within this study. Their research indicates that whilst there were only limited effects on recidivism, women involved in mentoring programmes that had high levels of contact with mentors were more likely to experience positive behavioural changes than those who met less frequently with mentors, indicating that contact time is a crucial element to the outcome of such programmes (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2007). Despite the limitations of this study, such as the fact that only two evaluations of mentoring in England and Wales informed the results, it was still regarded as being well aligned with the current study due to its focus on both the practical elements of carrying out mentoring and the significance of mentoring in principle.

Scotland has been delivering mentoring programmes through voluntary services for some time now, with a particular focus on working with vulnerable women and female offenders (Mairs and Tolland, 2013). Sacro is a community justice organisation in Scotland that provides a variety of services to help reduce offending and risk behaviour (Sacro, 2013). Their mentoring services typically support women on a one-to-one basis, meeting them initially whilst in prison and then following up post-release in the community, providing an advocacy role in assistance with practical needs and emotional support (Mairs and Tolland, 2013). Recently Sacro analysed the outcomes of four mentoring projects to evaluate the effects of their services. The overall results from the study indicated that for those women involved in the mentoring schemes there were several significant improvements in different areas; 14 per cent reported improvement in physical health, stopping drug use and offending, while 33 per cent reported improved emotional health (Sacro, 2013). The women also commented that they felt less likely to reoffend and had better mental and physical health than prior to using the programme (Sacro, 2013).

With these positive aspects in mind, mentoring for offenders could be seen as a crucial step in resettlement interventions and towards promoting desistance from crime. Women offenders often have difficulties with low sense of self-

esteem and loss of connections with social ties and community networks upon release; mentoring could therefore be seen as a crucial programme of support during the transition from prison back into society, as they are able to facilitate 'positive social capital' to aid reform, resettlement and pro-social behaviour (Women's Prison Association, 2008: 3). For Reisig and colleagues (2002) the term social capital is understood as a 'resource for action' (Coleman, 1988; S95), fixed in social networks that 'help individuals achieve goals that would otherwise be less attainable' (Reisig, Holtfreter and Morash, 2002: 169). Previous research focusing on the attainment of social capital suggests that women, alongside ethnic minorities and those from more socially disadvantaged backgrounds, are more likely to have a shortage of social capital (Reisig *et al*, 2002). It is suggested therefore that without sufficient intervention this deficit in social capital will continue due to the propensity for individuals to associate with others in similar 'social structures' (p. 171). An understanding of the significance of social bonds for female offenders is therefore significant in order to direct interventions appropriately.

Personal relationships of this sort can be a key site for 'socially and personally constructed interactions', providing a meaningful source of acceptance and sense of belonging (Simpson, 2006: 1). This is seen as particularly important for those without a 'significant other' who instead rely on close friendships or connections for a range of support, a problem common to a high number of women in custody and upon release. The kind of relationship that develops between a female offender and her mentor could therefore offer the creation of a significant relationship and its subsequent benefits. Allen (1989) comments that a positive pro-social friendship relationship of this kind is crucial at 'affirming a positive sense of self-identity and confirming self-worth' (Allen, 1989: 155). The prominence of a stable relationship for women is discussed in greater detail in the following section, and serves to highlight the importance of researching the mentor-mentee relationship in order to fully understand how a mentor can assist women with reintegration and offending behaviour. My study therefore looks to make an original contribution to this area of research by examining the nature of the relationship between mentor and service user.

A current example of a service that employs a holistic, strengths-focused approach to treatment is the *INSPIRE Women's Project* (similar in name to the Brighton *Inspire Project* that was used during research interviews with community mentors), established in Belfast in 2008. The project was designed to deliver 'women-centred' services in the community for women in the criminal justice systems, with three key objectives; the provision of a 'holistic, multi-agency response' for female offenders; the creation of a framework to address the 'complex needs' of women; and to assist with reintegration and desistance (Easton and Matthews, 2011: 2). Following an evaluation of the pilot, (Easton and Matthews, 2011) the *INSPIRE Women's Project* was perceived to be successful by both female offenders and key stakeholders; 78 per cent of women involved with the programme had not committed further offences, 70 per cent reported a change in attitude and 76 per cent reported an overall improvement in their self-esteem (Easton and Matthews, 2011: 6). Women also remarked positively on the quality of supervision, the 'women-only' aspect of provisions, the support they received with practical issues and the opportunity to make meaningful links to the community (Easton and Matthews, 2011: 5).

Another example is the *Together Women Project*, established in 2006, operating at five women's centres in England. *Together Women* was a government-invested project, set up in an attempt to enhance community support for female offenders and those at risk of criminal behaviour (Gelsthorpe, 2011). The key objectives of *Together Women* were to provide a 'one-stop-shop' centre that would offer holistic and individual support, as well as identify a lack in provisions and aim to fill them, in particular through linking up with community-based services (Gelsthorpe, 2011: 140). Following an evaluation of the project (Granville, 2009), many of the services provided by *Together Women* were regarded as positive, with key project outcomes indicating; a reduction in feelings of isolation by women; a successful effort to link them back to the community; a provision of support that enabled women to 'move on' rather than become dependent; the construction of effective coping strategies to reduce vulnerability; and 'improved life chances' by connecting women to networks of employment, training and

parenting (Granville, 2009: 13). Both the *INSPIRE Women's Project* and *Together Woman* programme could be seen to indicate the positive attributes of this style of service for women and the benefits of adopting a gender-informed approach to intervention programmes.

The use of female-to-female mentoring programmes in particular could be seen as demonstrating gender-focused guiding principles, advocating individualised, strengths-based support in a holistic, supportive environment. Finally, research by Rhodes (2005) suggests that *gender* is a key variable in offender mentoring: both in relation to how mentoring should be conducted and the type of relationship that could develop between mentor and service-user (Rhodes, 2005). Rhodes suggests that social psychological research indicates men and women respond differently to 'helping relationships'; women are socialised as children to be more 'caring and nurturing' and so consequently respond more effectively to social, compassionate forms of help (Rhodes, 2005: 1). The same is also seen for male and female friendships, with women being more 'communal' and men more 'instrumental', females are therefore more likely to turn to friends for comfort and emotional support in times of distress (Rhodes, 2005: 1). This research reinforces the idea that mentoring could be a key rehabilitative method for vulnerable women. This idea is explored further in the following section on mentoring, which aims to give a deeper insight into how mentoring programmes have grown in popularity within the criminal justice sector and the specific guiding principles that make it a suitable intervention for female offenders.

2.3. The relevance of relational theory in understanding the benefits and challenges of mentoring for Women

This study has a specific focus on exploring the type of relationship constructed between mentor and mentee, the effect this has on both offender and mentor and its impact on desistance, as a means of indicating the success of mentoring. For Farrall *et al* (2011), relationships and social interaction are seen as a catalyst for the desistance process. Their research suggests that relationships are a crucial

component in changing individual identities, developing coping mechanisms and offering opportunities for successful reintegration (Farrall *et al*, 2011). Relationships are also central to the construction of positive, pro-social bonds, another core element of the desistance process (Farrall *et al*, 2011; Cobbina *et al,* 2012).

Looking firstly at mentoring as a general practice, a study undertaken by Reich (1995) evaluates the benefits of mentoring in a workplace setting, paying specific attention to the concept of female mentees. Whilst this form of mentoring is no doubt distinct from mentoring with offenders, the underlying principles of the approach are consistent. Reich surveyed the 'what's and how's' of the relationship, questioning whether 'emotional ties' were developed and what kind of relationship was formed, a professional or personal one (Reich, 1995: 136). The study revealed that more than 99 per cent of the women surveyed (in comparison to 87 per cent of the men) felt their self-confidence had improved through the mentor relationship as well as awareness of their strengths (Reich, 1995: 136). Rhodes study (2002) on youth mentoring is regarded as relevant to my research objectives in its emphasis on how these relationships work and suggesting further research about psychotherapy can be relevant to explaining mentoring relationships (Rhodes, 2002). Although there are obvious differences, both mentoring and psychotherapy have mutual goals of forming positive self change through a supportive relationship and focus on the mentee/clients individual circumstances and motivation to alter behaviour and relationship factors in order to facilitate these changes (Rhodes, 2002).

Feminist writing on relationships could provide some insight into the importance of creating positive relationships for female offenders, which in turn might illuminate the potential benefits of mentoring schemes for women as implied by research in the previous sections. Contemporary feminist research suggests that the differences between men and women should be regarded as strengths rather than weaknesses; one example of this could be the female capacity for 'relatedness and connection' (Bloom *et al*, 2002: 23), both of which are key aspects of a mentoring relationship. With this in mind, Miller (1976)

suggests using the conceptual framework of *relational cultural theory* in order to understand personal relationships and the different way in which male and females develop psychologically (Miller, 1976; Calhoun *et al*, 2010). An understanding of relational theory when working with women is thought to be highly significant due to the importance of interpersonal relationships and family in a female offender's life (Covington, 2001).

Relational Theory was developed alongside the growing feminist movement during the 1970s and is often attributed to the work of the Stone Center and Jean Baker Miller in particular (Fletcher and Ragins, 2008). One of the core aspects of the relational model is the idea that individuals are 'socially constituted' by relationships; therefore looking to understand the complexities behind the formation of close relationships is key (Fletcher and Ragins, 2008). Jordan (2008) suggests this theory proposes that individuals develop through relationships, allowing individuals to 'grow through and toward connection' (Jordan, 2008: 2). Relational theory with regards to women focuses specifically on female development, speculating that a primary motivation for women is the establishment of a 'strong sense of connection' with others (Covington and Bloom, 2006: 6). Miller (1976) devised the term 'growth-fostering relationships' to describe relationships whereby active participation by both sides results in a mutually beneficial relationship (Miller, 1976). West (2005) proposes that the significance of this mutual relationship is the idea that the absence of such can result in the psychological problems and contribute to violent behaviour (West, 2005). This is a crucial aspect of the mentoring relationship that this study will examine: the idea that the relationship that develops between mentor and service user could be valuable for both parties, rather than just the mentee, as is traditionally found in most therapeutic programmes, as well as the idea that a strong connection can alter deviant or violent behaviour. Miller suggested that these growth-fostering relationships were typically made up of five key attributes: a sense of energy, increased sense of worth, clarity (of oneself and the other party in the relationship), productivity (to be motivated both in and out the relationship) and the desire for further connection (Jean Baker Miller Training Institute, 2013). Miller (1986) explains that these outcomes establish

'psychological growth' for females. 'Mutuality, empathy, and power with others' are therefore the key qualities of a positive environment for women that will allow for personal growth (Bloom *et al*, 2002: 8). The impact of 'psychological growth' for women will be touched on in greater detail when examining this theory in relation to social bonds.

McCauley (2013) states that the model of relational theory promotes the concept of reconnection with others, reaffirming the idea that a dependable mentoring relationship could foster positive connections that in turn enable female offenders to gain greater self esteem and the ability to form significant, supportive relationships and contacts post-release. This reiterates the idea that connection, rather than separation is crucial for women in order to develop a sense of self-worth and personal growth; 'women's primary motivation is to build a sense of connection with others' (De Cou and Van Wright, 2002: 182).

2.3.1. The benefits of positive relationships and social bonds for women

When discussing an understanding of criminal behaviour, there is a general agreement across criminological literature that social relationships are significant (Cobbina *et al,* 2012; Rumgay, 2004). For women in particular, relationships are an important part of re-entry to the community and for desistance (Leverentz, 2006). This study will adopt a female focused framework as it looks to provide a gendered concept of a women's experience and understanding of the mentoring relationship. This approach is considered the most suitable for this research because of its specific focus on women's experiences and improving their position. The focuses of social bond theory on relationships could also provide another set of theoretical insights relevant to understanding the role of relationships in female offender mentoring. Travis Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory looks to explain delinquency as directly related to the bonds or connections that individuals form to pro-social people, institutions and values (Pratt *et al*, 2011). This theory is composed of four key features: attachment to significant others, commitment, involvement in

traditional activities and belief in ethical values (Ozbay and Ozcan, 2006; Pratt *et al*, 2011). Sampson and Laub's (1993) extensive research surrounding social bonds stipulates that strong social ties, to individuals or institutions, can successfully limit reoffending and promote desistance (Sampson and Laub, 1993). With this theory as a framework, this current study looks to explore whether these kinds of pro-social bonds are formulated through a mentoring relationship. Pro-social bonds can be a significant source of both capital and social support, allowing offenders to gain connections and achievements that may not otherwise have been possible (Cobbina *et al,* 2012). Farrall *et al* (2011) explain that as these relationships develop, offenders can amass 'human capital' to help further their access to employment or education (Farrall *et al,* 2011). The support and validation gained from these conventional relationships can signal to offenders that they are capable of contributing positively to society and are able to develop a new, 'prosocial identity' (Cobbina *et al*, 2012: 333). The 'social capital' gained from these interactions is also a central element of the desistance process, giving value to the formation of trustworthy relations, creating means for social responsibility and facilitating individual productivity and worth (McNeill, 2009: 50).

Social bond theory is often argued to be a gendered concept as it has distinct influences for male and female offenders. As this study is focusing on the effect of social bonds for women specifically, it is significant to first establish how they impact male criminal behaviour and desistance. For male offenders, the influence of positive social bonds is often attributed to the formation of a connection with a 'conventional' individual (such as through marriage), as well as employment and parenthood (Sampson and Laub, 2003; Leverentz, 2006; Giordano *et al,* 2002). As well as this pro-social connection acting as a stabilising effect, it can also lead to a change in routine activities and thus an avoidance of previous deviant influences (Sampson and Laub, 2003). The concept of a 'non-criminal identity' and subsequent desistance from crime is consequently more achievable (Sommers *et al*, 1994; Giordano *et al*, 2002; Leverentz, 2006). Rumgay's (2004) research is pertinent here, as she explains that desistance for women may be a consequence of the 'recognition of an opportunity to claim an alternative,

desired and socially approved personal identity', made possible through exposure to strong social networks (Rumgay, 2004: 405). Farrall (2002) also argues this idea, suggesting that attaining something of significance, such as a meaningful relationship, can promote a reconsideration of an offenders sense of self (Farrall, 2002). For women, the influence of marriage is less significant: males are more likely to form a connection with non-offending females, whilst the opposite is true for women (Leverentz, 2006). Intimate relationships with deviant males are subsequently a common stimulus for female offending behaviour and less likely to influence desistance post-release.

This study is therefore interested in examining how the kind of relationship that forms between mentor and mentee can act as a positive social connection for women, whether it is able to promote a changing self-identity and could facilitate desistance. It is also concerned with possible obstacles or barriers that might exist in the creation of this kind of mentoring relationship. Rumgay's research reiterates the possible benefits of mentoring, suggesting its ability to provide means to enable the transition process from 'offender' to 'non'-offender as well as providing access to a 'pro-social source of support' (Rumgay, 2004: 414), a significant relationship many women in the criminal justice system may not have previously experienced. In terms of 'what works' with female desistance, as well as the fundamental role of support networks, the creation of an 'altered self-concept' is thought to be central to reform efforts (Rumgay, 2004), both of which are arguably a key aspect of mentoring programmes. Rumgay, along with Farrall (2011) and Giordano *et al* (2002), also proposes that a central characteristic of rehabilitative support should be the validation of this pro-social identity, explaining that 'explicit endorsement of the conventional identity' is particularly significant for women's development and desistance (Rumgay, 2004: 415; Farrall, 2011).

This notion of the creation of a non-offending, positive identity is a central strand to this research study, which looks to explore whether mentoring is able to facilitate this process. Giordano *et al's* (2002) research on desistance highlights this idea, suggesting a 'positive cognitive transformation' to be the most

significant precursor to recidivism (Giordano *et al,* 2002: 999). These changes are heavily influenced by the individual's surrounding environment and provide the framework to make significant life changes. Previous research studies point to these positive features as 'turning points' (Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001) for the offender, whilst Giordano *et al* (2002) regard them as 'hooks for change'; explaining the individual action of taking advantage of opportunities which act as catalysts to help drive changes (Giordano *et al*, 2002; 1000). They theorise that there are four interrelated cognitive transformations, with the initial transformation being the most fundamental – a 'basic openness to change' (Giordano *et al*, 2002: 1000). The second shift refers to an individual's exposure to a specific type of hook for change, as a willingness to change alone is inadequate to conduct real transformations. Giordano *et al* explain that 'both exposure to a hook and one's attitude toward it are important elements of successful change' (Giordano *et al*: 1001). This notion is key when looking at mentoring programmes as it emphasises the importance of creating a positive, pro-social environment for the women, which also fosters the idea that continued deviance is incompatible within this new setting. This idea therefore works towards a model of desistance that is influenced by both individual action and social organisations together (McNeill *et al,* 2012). The final steps of a cognitive transformation are realised when the offender is able to construct a conventional 'replacement self' (Giordano *et al,* 2002; McNeill *et al*, 2012) and an altered view of deviant behaviour. Giordano and colleagues suggest the desistance process is considered complete 'when an actor no longer sees these same behaviours as positive, viable or even personally relevant' (Giordano *et al,* 2002: 1002). This theory is also reiterated by Sampson and Laub (2003) who stipulate the significance of personal agency in the desistance process, and Sommer's, Baskin and Fagin (1994) who find that personal motivation to cease offending is a central aspect for women's desistance in particular. This research study will therefore aim to locate whether and how mentoring programmes are able to instigate a transformation in self-identity for female offenders

Georg Simmel's (1950) sociological theory on dyadic relationships is also useful when examining the significance of the mentoring-mentee relationship and the

influence a pro-social relationship can have. Simmel suggested that the unique quality of the dyadic partnership is the intimacy it affords to those involved (Simmel, 1950). This type of relationship is usually seen in friendships or marriages, suggesting mentoring has the ability to form a close connection between the mentor and mentee 'if the internal side of the relation is felt to be essential' (Simmel, 1950: 126). A dyadic relationship is also seen to have mutual dependency, making it a stronger dynamic than if one more person was involved, and stressing the idea of commitment and trust as key elements of the relationship (Garvey *et al*, 2009; Simmel, 1950). Simmel also considers the importance of how the relationship is conducted and the 'contents' disclosed and discussed, suggesting that mentors need to keep offenders motivated and involved in order for the bond to remain secure, 'there is a need for continued renewal and stimulation within the dyad for it to survive' (Garvey *et al*, 2009: 20). The concept of disclosure during the formation of a dyadic relationship is also significant in relation to mentoring as it suggests that the mentor, as well as the mentee, will also need to reveal certain personal details about themselves in order to create a strong, trustworthy relationship. This study will have a multi-focus on the perceptions of peer mentors and mentees in prison, along with community mentors, allowing for greater understanding of the intricacies and differences in the dynamics of the mentoring relationship in two significant contexts.

Recent research by Weaver (2013) also looks at the dynamics of social relations in regards to offending and desisting, suggesting that any social interaction creates a 'mutual or interdependent connection' between individuals, echoing Simmel's earlier ideas (Weaver, 2013: 13; Donati, 2011). It is this reciprocity that formulates a bond between individuals and the consequent mutual assets of this relationship, such as concern, trust and reliability, are strong motivators for behaviour (Weaver, 2013). For female offenders, mentors could effectively construct this kind of close, reciprocal relationship because of the high level of contact associated with mentoring practices (Brown and Ross, 2010). Weaver also suggests that whilst social relations are key to influencing change, it is crucially the 'meanings and significance' of the relational exchange that

contributes to desistance, stating that 'social relations do not cause, nor are they conditional on, behavioural change' (Weaver, 2013: 13). With this in mind, a critical evaluation on the kind of relationship that develops between mentor and mentee is significant in order to determine how meaningful an exchange it can be and the effects of their interactions with one another. It also suggests the importance of matching the right mentor to the female offender in order for the relationship to successfully contribute to pro-social change. Weaver (2013) concludes by stating that desistance from crime can be readily supported by means and processes that endeavour to establish personal and beneficial relationships and connections to social networks, highlighting peer mentoring in particular as a key resource in 'desistance-promoting' justice services (Weaver, 2013: 14). The evidence surrounding the centrality of relationships and social connections for women confirms the notion that mentoring could be a highly influential way to promote desistance from crime as well as the connections and incentives to grasp opportunities for change.

To conclude, based on the literature outlined above, this study looks to fill a gap in criminological research regarding the influence of mentoring relationships on female recidivism and re-entry into society. Following an examination of the literature surrounding female pathways in and out of crime, this study aims to explore whether, and how, different forms of mentoring programmes, both within prison and through the gate, are able to target female-specific criminogenic needs, and the merits of adopting a gender-focused approach to rehabilitation. The study is also concerned with revealing the nature of the relationship that develops between the peer mentor and mentee, looking to explore how a close connection is formed, what impact this can have, and how these relationships are described and understood by both parties involved.

2.3.2. The impact of negative relationships for women

Previous research focusing on female recidivism measures suggests a disruption of social networks is a distinct factor in both women's offending and desistance,

therefore the formation of meaningful relationships whilst in prison can prove to be highly influential in terms of recidivism and desistance (Brown and Ross, 2010), reaffirming my own study's focus on how mentoring relationships can impact behaviour. Within recidivism literature, an established body of research has recorded the correlates of reoffending, suggesting that elements of age, drug history, employment and education are all significant factors for understanding reoffending behaviour in men and women (Cobbina *et al*, 2012). For offenders post-release, strong social bonds are also regarded as a principal catalyst for desistance (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Cobbina and colleagues (2012) suggest that recent research indicates the influence of social bonds on offending behaviour could be conditioned by criminal propensity as well as, most crucially for this study, the notion of gender (King *et al,* 2007; Cobbina *et al*, 2012). Focusing primarily on women, relationships are regarded as significant to female offenders in two ways: negative interpersonal relationships are able to provide a direct pathway to criminal behaviour, whilst strong, positive connections can help to reduce the likelihood of offending.

For women who enter the criminal justice system, the influence of negative interpersonal relationships can be a key contributor to their criminal behaviour. Covington and Bloom (2006) suggest that women disproportionately experience relationships based on 'disconnection and violence' during their childhood, which can then be intensified by experiences with the criminal justice system (Covington and Bloom, 2006: 6). Women are also more likely to be motivated towards criminal behaviour by an intimate partner as a consequence of negative personal relationships, or suffer substance abuse due to partner or familial influences (Covington and Bloom, 2006; Cobbina *et al*, 2008). Research by Alarid *et al* (2000) determines that women who are married or cohabiting with a male offender are also considerably more likely to participate in drug or property crimes (Alarid *et al,* 2000; Griffin and Armstrong, 2003). Negative intimate relationships can therefore also be seen as a significant pathway into crime for female offenders in particular. This idea is especially significant in relation to mentoring as the creation of a trustworthy mentoring relationship could potentially offer women an alternative ideal for a stable, personal relationship.

Byrne and Trew (2008) analysed the connection between criminal behaviour and social relations, suggesting that along with loss of employment, the breakdown of personal relationships was strongly linked to offending (Byrne and Trew, 2008: 245). In situations of strong delinquent peer influence, criminal behaviour was perceived to be both financially rewarding and a 'low-risk' activity, and seen as a 'positive… on a social and rational level' (Byrne and Trew, 2008: 253).

Research by Leverentz (2006) is one of few studies that focus on relationships and desistance for female offenders specifically. This research reinforces the idea that for women, romantic relationships can have a more negative role in their lives and are often influential in female criminality rather than desistance (Leverentz, 2006). This is in contrast to the 'stabilizing force' women are often seen to be for male offenders, as they are regarded as being a positive influence that encourages men towards more conventional, anti-criminal behaviour (Leverentz, 2006: 459; Laub and Sampson, 2003). For the majority of female offenders, these complex relationships are a direct influence on offending (Zaplin, 2007). Offering one-to-one mentoring services that strive to develop a supportive relationship could therefore assist in providing a framework for a positive relationship that women could model their behaviour on post-release. An understanding of women offenders complex relational experiences can also assist to form a better understanding of how mentoring relationships are conducted, this background knowledge of the negative relationships experienced by women is therefore crucial for studying mentoring.

Bloom *et al* (2002) reiterate this idea, suggesting that an experience of trusting and mutually beneficial relationships that do not duplicate previous neglect and abuse is essential in helping women alter their behaviour (Bloom *et al*, 2002: 67). This relational context therefore provides a crucial means to understand the reasoning behind female offending behaviour, the motivations for their actions and how they can successfully desist from crime and reintegrate back into society. Bloom and colleagues conclude that 'understanding the role of relationships and connections is…fundamental to understanding the female

offender' (Bloom *et al* 2002: 67). This study's focus on the 'negative' relationships experienced by women is significant as it indicates an important area for mentoring treatment to focus on. For the majority of women in the criminal justice system who have only experienced abusive, negative, intimate relationships, exploring the impact of a holistic, one-to-one mentoring relationship may provide greater understanding of the influence positive social connections are able to have on desistance.

Negative relationships for women can continue to be a feature of their lives within prison in relation to concepts of power dynamics evident within a custodial setting. The prison environment is often characterised by elements of power imbalance, a lack of agency and a general form of control over all aspects of every day life (Liebling, 2004), Wooldridge and Steiner (2016) state that 'the exercise of power involves one person's ability to influence the behaviour of another' (Wooldridge and Steiner, 2016: 130). Due to the nature of mentoring programmes and the significance of relationships to women in prison, the concept of power and control in female prison establishments has also been referred to within previous mentoring-related studies, although not often with a focus on women. For Hannah-Moffat (1995), the concept of a women-centred approach to prison can be argued as being based on aspects of social control, with prison procedures, such as the use of strip searches, causing further trauma for women who have previously been victims of abuse (Mageehon, 2008). It is this replication of power through procedures of control and the patriarchal nature of the prison environment that is typically discussed in relation to women in prison.

With regard to the principles underpinning mentoring practices, previous studies have suggested mentoring as a form of intervention to be 'empowering in both prison and probation settings' as opposed to previous forms of rehabilitation programmes that are argued as leaving offenders 'powerless' (Kavanagh and Borrill, 2013: 14). Peer mentoring in particular has been regarded to be 'more egalitarian' in process due to its move away from the delivery of interventions by a peer rather than an 'other' in an effort to limit the

hierarchy of the relationship (Buck, 2016: 26). However despite this idea, Buck (2016) suggests that mentoring as a concept is inherently hierarchical, where mentors position themselves 'not as being coercive, whilst subtly exhibiting an experimental authority' (Buck, 2016: 281). Schippers (2008) offers an example of a study that looks at this concept of power differences in the mentoring relationship as being constructed through attempts to establish their own 'point of difference' and 'higher status', rather than the distinctly hierarchical nature of the relationship (Brown and Ross, 2010: 47). This concept of understanding power dynamics was also seen in relation to the construction of the mentoring relationship. Buck, Corcoran and Worrall (2015) give an example from their own research that indicates the mentors 'awareness of power disparities' within the relationship when attempting to negotiate the type of relationship that is formed and how this is managed (p.162). The degree to which mentoring relationships can limit replicating previous experiences of control and power, typically seen within more professionalised prison interventions, is an area in need of further exploration.

2.4. Chapter summary

Despite emerging research around mentoring programmes with offenders, this chapter highlights the fact that there is still limited data looking specifically at women within the UK criminal justice system, particularly with regards to peer mentoring programmes in prisons. The literature in this chapter catalogues the way in which rehabilitation interventions are changing for women, as well the growing body of research that focuses on understanding the distinct ways in which women experience offending behaviour and their routes into, and out of, crime.

With regard to female offenders specifically, mentoring has begun to gain momentum as a contemporary and particularly influential means to inform women's desistance and assist community reintegration by meeting more intangible needs, such as emotional support and empowerment (Women's Prison Association, 2008; Brown and Ross, 2010). The literature offers an

overview of what is currently known about how mentoring is used and the perceived effects it can have. Despite this growing interest, Colley (2001) suggests that there is still a need for the 'development of significant theoretical concepts or models of mentoring', similar to those seen in theories of counselling and therapeutic interventions (Colley, 2001: 178). The majority of studies that focus on mentoring in this context are also limited in their critique of the practice, with a generally 'favourable view' of mentoring (Colley, 2001: 178). Although there are studies that have touched on the challenges of mentoring practices (eg. Buck, Corcoran and Worral, 2015), these are limited by offering a review of mentoring as a whole, rather than always a specific focus on the experiences of women, and rarely at mentoring in both prison and the community.

A key aspect emphasised within this chapter is the impact of relationships, and the significance of relational theory, with regards to interventions for female offenders. The chapter gives an overview of both 'positive' and 'negative' bonds for women, based on the relevance of 'attachment deficits' in relation to their offending behaviour (Stevens, 2015: 178). The literature discussed affords a basis from which this study can effectively build upon and provide greater understanding of the benefits of mentoring female offenders and the significance of the mentor-mentee relationship paradigm. Attention is also given to the principles of desistance theory and whether this process is different for women. This study attempts to fill the gap in research around the correlation of mentoring and desistance for women specifically by providing a distinctive, critical view of the two forms of mentoring, (peer, prison-based schemes and community-based programmes) in order to determine how to meet the needs of women both in and out of prison.

Chapter Three - Methodology

The purpose of this research is to build a greater understanding of the outcomes of mentoring programmes for female offenders. The research is based on data gathered from a series of qualitative interviews with female offender mentors and female service-users. As this sector of the prison population is relatively under-researched, the use of qualitative interviews was seen as a suitable approach to capture their distinct experiences set against previous research on male offenders and their involvement in mentoring (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988). Building an understanding of the kind of relationship that develops between the mentor and mentee is also a key focus of this research, as it seeks to assess the nature of the relationship that is formed, the subsequent impact for both mentor and mentee and what relation this type of relationship has in respect of women and desistance theory. The research adopts a gender-informed framework, looking to conduct research focused on women specifically, with an emphasis on understanding the peer mentor and mentees individual experiences of mentoring in prison, and the perceived impact of mentoring through the gate as understood by community mentors.

In order to address the research aims and objectives, qualitative research was undertaken in the form of semi-structured interviews. This method involved in-depth research with elements of an ethnographic approach, with female, adult mentors and mentees. The research was also reflexive in nature, in order to reflect on my own experience of researching women and on the dual role of researcher and female mentor, and with regard to personal experience with acting in the role of volunteer mentor in the community. The research design and methodology is outlined in greater detail in the following section.

3.1. The research design, phase 1: researching women in prison

Over the last twenty years throughout England and Wales, prison-based research has benefited from a steady resurgence, corresponding with a stage of significant

growth and transformation of the prison estate (Jewkes and Wright, 2016). The nature of more recent prison ethnographic research has also changed considerably in order to incorporate and demonstrate ideas around 'what it means to be human' within a regimented custodial setting (Jewkes and Wright, 2016: 663). The research has been designed to separate the study into two stages; firstly looking at mentoring in the context of peer mentors for women in prison, and secondly exploring the way in which mentoring is characterised and conducted outside of prison within the community. It was deemed appropriate to separate the research into these two phases in order to discuss a more accurate portrayal of the women's journey through the criminal justice system, with different forms of mentoring programmes punctuating their journey through prison and back into the community. Dividing the research in this way also allows for a more concentrated focus on the prison-based interviews, and permits a greater understanding of how mentoring is conducted as a whole and across different regions of the justice system.

3.1.1. The landscape of the prison

'Being attached to a prison is a prerequisite to understanding the dynamics of life there and the social relationships that lie therein'

Harvey (2008: 489)

This research study was conducted within HMP/YOI Bronzefield, a privately run women's prison located in Ashford, Surrey. The prison has four residential units as well as a Mother and Baby unit, and houses short term adults, restricted status prisoners[3]; life-sentence prisoners and young offenders[4], with a Certified Normal Accommodation of 527[5]. The residential units consist of;

[3] 'Restricted status' prisoners is a term used in female prisons for the secure accommodation of those inmates whose release would pose risk to the public.
[4] The women's prison Prison Information, justice.gov.uk [accessed: June 2016]
[5] Independent Monitoring Board, Annual Report 2015/2016, www.imb.org.uk [accessed January 2017]

- House block 1: Housing convicted and remand prisoners, as well as a separate unit for those recovering from substance misuse. This house block was one of the main research sites for interviewing mentees.
- House block 2: Remand prisoners and a separate induction unit - three peer mentors discussed undertaking their role within the induction unit, acting as mentors to women when first entering into the prison
- House block 3: Convicted and sentenced prisoners
- House block 4: Enhanced and first stage lifer and long-term prisoners; the majority of peer mentors spoken to lived within this house block as mentors were required to be 'enhanced' in order to qualify for the mentoring role (HM Inspectorate Report, 2015).

During the most recent Prison Inspectorate Report into Bronzefield (November 2015), the prison was regarded as having a 'complex' prison population of women with many inherent risks, with a high number reporting drug abuse (over 40 per cent) and emotional or mental health problems (66 per cent) (HM Inspectorate Report, 2015). Although it was not a stipulation of the research study, it is also important to comment on the significance of the prison's status as a privately run establishment, with Sodexo holding the contract. It was the first women's establishment in England and Wales to be privately managed (HM Inspectorate Report, 2015). Prison privatisation is argued as being able to provide greater innovation and reform, whilst delivering a more cost-effective form of prison management (Carter, 2001). However, the actual outcomes of prison privatisation are varied, with reported problems of low employment levels and inexperienced staffing seen to be an issue across a number of private prison establishments in England, suggesting the scope of meaningful personal contact between staff and prisoners is limited (HM Inspectorate Report, 2004). As this study was only conducted in one site, it is impossible to comment on whether the private prison delivered more effective peer mentoring than public sector prisons, although a number of research participants commented on experiencing different types of mentoring programmes at different levels across a number of public prisons, such as HMP Holloway.

While conducting this research study in multiple women's prisons would have been advantageous in some senses, this was seen as unmanageable due to time restrictions. Joel Harvey (2008), in reference to his own prison-based research, discussed how researching in one prison site can potentially be more beneficial in terms of providing a 'richer insight' into the everyday lives of prisoners because of the prolonged amount of time spent within the prison (Harvey, 2008: 488). This can allow for greater knowledge and understanding of the prison regime, staff relationships and the 'language' of the prison, all of which are highly beneficial when conducting qualitative research interviews (Harvey, 2008: 488). During my own research, I was able to become more familiar with the day-to-day management of the prison and consequently structure my time in the prison more efficiently. For example, after continually visiting the housing block 1, where the drug rehabilitation unit was located, I soon realised that conducting interviews in the afternoon rather than morning would yield more effective responses and a greater number of respondents. When I had previously attempted to conduct my interviews during the morning association time, a large number of women were pre-occupied with ensuring they received their drug script on time or trying to manage medical appointments to participate effectively in an interview.

3.1. 2. Gaining access

Using qualitative methods for research can be problematic in itself. However when also conducting fieldwork within an institutional setting, a number of further site-specific issues can be magnified by the secure nature of the research location. Difficulties around acquiring initial access to the prison site, establishing a rapport with staff and inmates and gaining and upholding the trust of research participants are all hallmark issues of prison-based research (Miller and Tweksbury, 2001; Patenaude, 2004).

One of the most challenging aspects of undertaking qualitative research within prison is initially gaining entry to the site. Externally, barriers exist in the form of the National Offender Management Service Research Committee, the university

ethics board and the prison itself. Prior to beginning fieldwork, access was successfully sought through these three processes with the completion of various ethical forms as well as a letter to the prison governor explaining the full extent of the study and the rationale and perceived benefits in conducting the research. The study was also formulated in line with the research outcomes dictated by the National Offender Management Service.

It is necessary when undertaking prison research to 'cultivate contacts' as these are crucial during the access process (King and Liebling, 2008). In order to negotiate the prison's participation, key 'gate keepers' were identified; Burgess (1984) describes these significant individuals as those that 'have the power to grant or withhold access' (Burgess, 1984: 48). This prison site was chosen in particular because of previously established contact with senior staff members through my supervisor, Professor Rosie Meek. The research was also undertaken during a period where peer mentoring programmes in prisons were being regenerated and acclaimed as a significant contributor to lowering reoffending rates within political discourse. At HMP/YOI Bronzefield in particular, staff explained that the peer mentoring scheme had been re-designed and re-structured to be used more widely across the establishment. In an attempt to formalise the process, women who were applying for the role of peer mentor were required to fill out an application form (an example of which can be found in Appendix V) and complete an informal interview. Prison staff were more accommodating of my research as I agreed to share any significant findings and a general overview of perceptions of the peer mentoring scheme once my fieldwork was complete.

As Jewkes notes, 'access is a continual process of negotiation and renegotiation in prisons which does not necessarily end when you are in' (Jewkes, 2002: 72). After a short phase out of the prison during the Christmas and New Year period, I was forced to renegotiate access when attempting to continue my research interviews due to difficulties in re-establishing contact with staff members that had previously assisted my fieldwork access. Due to the high turnover rate within prison staffing, this is a common difficulty for researchers when

attempting to uphold key contacts and established routes of entry. Whilst accessing the prison itself was a lengthy process, once inside I was also required to gain access to other specific areas of the prison in order to undertake research with as many participants as possible. With regard to his own experience undertaking sensitive research, Lee (1999) remarks that access is an 'often implicit process, in which the researchers right to be present is continually renegotiated' (Lee, 1999: 122). This was true of my own study as I was required to establish contacts in the education wing and the drug recovery unit in housing block 1 to maximise the scope of the research interviews and to gain an understanding of how mentoring was conducted across different areas of the prison. This contact was established through my initial gatekeeper, a more senior member of staff in the Education and Skills Department, who introduced me to fellow staff members with whom I could have a point of contact throughout my research period.

3.1.3. Sampling and recruitment

The first stage of the research study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with peer mentors and mentees who were currently incarcerated within HMP/YOI Bronzefield. These interviews were carried out with adult female prisoners who are presently working as peer mentors and prisoners who have encountered some form of mentoring whilst in prison. The understanding of peer mentoring in this context refers to the working relationship between two prisoners, where the mentor provides 'support, guidance and practical assistance' to a fellow prisoner or mentee (Aitken, 2014: 11). The research interviews aimed to address the following key areas – a copy of the full interview schedule can be found in the appendices [see Appendix III for mentee questions; Appendix IV for peer mentor interview questions]:

- How peer mentoring is used across the prison estate; in terms of practice and policies
- The perceived impact of peer mentoring on female 'criminogenic needs'

- The perceived impact peer mentoring has for both peer mentors and mentees; in terms of emotional and practical support, day-to-day life in prison, attitudes to criminal behaviour and coping mechanisms
- Personal experiences of mentoring and being mentored; together with a reflection on the negative and positive aspects of peer mentoring
- The type of relationships that develop between mentor and mentee and the perceived impact of these relationships to the success of the mentoring partnership
- The perceived impact of mentoring on female offenders in the transition from custody to community

I began my interviews in early October 2015 and was given full access to walk freely around the prison after a short key training session (discussed further below, in Section 3.5.1). I had intended to interview as many peer mentors and corresponding mentees as possible, with an aim of speaking to around 30 women in total. The criteria for those involved in the study were women who had worked as peer mentors or had been allocated a peer mentor whilst incarcerated. I interviewed 18 women in prison in total; 13 peer mentors (see. Figure 3) and 5 women who had received some form of peer mentoring (see Figure. 2). The peer mentors interviewed were predominantly drawn from the mentors working in the education wing of the prison, and those working in the recovery wing in house block 1. Respondents Diana and Caitlin also worked within the Integrated Offender Management Unit, assisting women at reception when coming into the prison. Interviews with peer mentors took place in the classrooms within the education wing or alternatively the library area when it was not in use.

A larger number of the mentees spoken to were from house block 1 and were given a peer mentor as part of their drug recovery programme. Although attempts were made to try and gain data that was as unbiased as possible, it may be that for those mentees who were currently taking part in the drug recovery programme, the amount of time spent in the programme and their attitudes towards the programme being mandatory may have influenced their opinion of

how peer mentoring was being used. However, it was felt that even if this was the case their experiences of mentoring were still valid and worthwhile to the research study. For a number of women interviewed, the impending closure of HMP Holloway was also an external factor that could have influenced opinions on the way in which the prison was operating. However, although this topic was mentioned by some of the women interviewed, it was not felt that this significantly influenced opinions about the impact and use of peer mentoring programmes specifically.

Figure 2: Mentee pseudonyms and their location in prison:

Becca	House block 1
Hannah	House block 1
Leslie	House block 1
Michelle	Education wing
Sarah	House block 1

Figure 3: Peer mentor pseudonyms and location in prison:

Alice	Education wing,
Caitlin	Recovery unit (house block 1)
Diana	Education wing,
Emma	Education wing

Grace	Education wing,
Irene	Education wing,
Jenny	Recovery unit (house block 1)
Kylie	Recovery unit (house block 1)
Lisa	Education wing
Natalie	Education wing
Olivia	Education wing
Paula	Recovery unity (house block 1)
Yvonne	Education wing

Locating women who were suited to the study was not a problem I had anticipated when first negotiating access to the prison site due to being informed by staff prior to beginning the fieldwork that they had a large number of women working as peer mentors and a much larger number who currently benefited from partaking in a peer mentoring programme. Although I had relative control over which woman I wanted to interview, I allowed staff to assist in allocating women to me for interviews or suggesting women who were known to them to be either peer mentors or in receipt of peer mentoring. However, when actually conducting the interviews with a number of the women suggested to me by staff, several reported never having had a mentor whilst in prison, with others stating they were unaware of what a mentor was or did. This resulted in a slight setback

in data collection, as I had to continue asking for different respondents who met the criteria of my research. This also highlighted one of the key problems observed with the peer mentoring programme within HMP/YOI Bronzefield; whilst there was much discussion and attempts to apply the peer mentoring programme widely across the estate, from speaking to the women it was clear this was not the case and there was a significant lag between what was reported to be in place and its actual implementation.

3.2. Research design - phase 2: interviews with community mentors

The second phase of the research involved qualitative interviews with 7 female mentors who were currently employed or volunteering with a mentoring organisation that supports female offenders post-release (see Figure 3.) Respondents for this phase of the research were recruited through contact with third sector organisations that provide mentoring support for women, the organisations involved were:

- *Catch 22* – a London-based charity that conducts mentoring programmes with ex-offenders as a paid position
- *Pecan* – a London based organisation, who ran the 'Moving On' programme; this was a female-focused mentoring scheme looking to provide all forms of support for women who have been in contact with criminal justice services
- *Brighton Women's Centre* – a Brighton based women's refuge which offered mentoring to women in and around Sussex on a volunteer basis through the 'Brighton *Inspire Project*'

These third sector organisations were deemed suitable research sites due to their particular focus on the needs of women, which was seen to be in-line with the gendered approach adopted with this study. Both *Pecan* and the *Brighton Women's Centre's* services were developed for women and conducted by women, employing a holistic, gender-focused approached to rehabilitation programmes.

Catch 22, despite not being strictly female-led, is known for its well-developed mentoring programmes for both men and women currently released from prison. The interviews with respondents from *Catch 22* were also able to provide a parallel experience to mentoring with women having acted as mentors for male offenders recently released from prison.

In terms of the interview site for the community mentors, the majority of interviews took place at the respondents' work place. For those mentors who were part of the *Brighton Inspire Project*, the interviews were undertaken at the University of Brighton as both respondents had connections to the university. At the same time as the research interviews were taking place, the *Brighton Women's Centre* was coming to the end of its funding for the *Inspire Project*. Despite the possibility that this could potentially influence responses relating to how useful or beneficial mentoring could be this was not an issue recorded within the data as no respondents mentioned funding to be a problem. There were also limited research questions that related to funding sources and instead women were questioned about whether set targets or goals were derived for mentoring.

Figure 4: Community mentor pseudonyms and organisation names:

Anna	Pecan – Moving On
Sally	Pecan – Moving On
Jessica	Pecan – Moving On
Maria	Brighton Inspire Project
Sam	Brighton Inspire Project
Mary	Catch 22

Nicky	Catch 22

3.2. 1. Becoming a volunteer

Initial contact was made with the *Brighton Women's Centre* after locating an online advert that requested volunteer mentors for their female mentoring programme the *Brighton Inspire Project.* I applied and was successful at being brought onto the project as a volunteer mentor for women who have been in contact with the criminal justice system. I felt it would be valuable to gain a first-hand understanding of both the experience of the mentoring role as well as the practice and processes relating to how this form of intervention is organised and carried out within a community setting. For Gelsthorpe (1993), good research requires active participation with organisations or individuals in order to fully understand and represent their perspectives, and this mentoring role offered me lived experienced of such a mentoring relationship myself, as well as gaining a greater insight into what kind of impactful outcomes can occur as a consequence of this form of rehabilitation intervention. Undertaking qualitative research in this area whilst being fully immersed in the mentoring role allowed me to become personally engaged with the research and develop a more comprehensive introspective into the significance of this form of relationship. My insight and thoughts during my time as a volunteer mentor are discussed in greater detail further on within this chapter when discussing reflexivity in research more broadly.

Volunteering with the Brighton based mentoring organisation also allowed me direct access to a wider pool of research participants and subsequently a number of interviews were conducted with fellow mentors from the project. In order to limit researcher bias, I recruited and conducted interviews once my period of volunteering had ended in order to minimise any crossover between my personal experience as a mentor and my roles and responsibilities as a

researcher. In total, 7 interviews were carried out with mentors from the three third sector organisations. Research participants were located after researching viable third sector organisations and establishing contact with key gatekeepers. Initial contact with *Catch 22* and *Pecan* was established after attending a female offender rehabilitation conference, where I introduced myself to a key stakeholder in each organisation and was able to contact them further regarding my research proposal. I contacted the programme co-ordinator for the *Brighton Inspire Project* directly and was able to undertake my research interviews within the Women's Centre in Brighton after completing the period of volunteering.

3.2.2. Sampling and recruitment

Once I had established a contact at each organisation, snowball sampling was used to recruit further participants. This method was seen as the most appropriate for the study as it enables the researcher to 'locate information-rich, key informants' (Patton, 2002: 237). A 'purposeful sampling method' was another aspect of qualitative inquiry that was adopted when deciding on who was to be interviewed; this method dictates that specific participants were 'handpicked' based on their understanding of the issues investigated and their knowledge and experience of the mentoring process (Denscombe, 2014: 41).

The research aims and objectives for Phase 2 were similar to those specified in Phase 1 (see Appendix VIII for an example of the interview schedule for community mentors), albeit it with the key difference of understanding community mentoring through the gate and the different way in which it can be impactful in comparison to peer mentoring, with the interviews seeking to address:

- The key policies and practices involved in conducting mentoring for women in the community post release
- Whether, and how, mentoring programmes in the community are perceived to be able to address women's criminogenic needs

- The significance of adopting a gendered approach to rehabilitative programmes
- How the mentoring relationship is developed, sustained and the impact it can have on the outcomes of mentoring for female offenders

For this phase of the research, an audio recorder was used to record all interviews to ensure the data was captured in its entirety and to preserve verbatim the discussions, perspectives and beliefs expressed during the interview. This method of collection was considerably easier than note taking during prison research interviews and resulted in much longer and more in-depth transcripts, this issue is discussed in greater detail in due course.

3.3. Interviewing as a research method

Conducting semi-structured and in-depth interviews was seen as the most appropriate method for providing a more inclusive investigation into an area that is still relatively under-researched (Fielding and Thomas, 2008). Qualitative methods are more likely to yield richer, more comprehensive data than quantitative measures, particularly when researching personal experiences (Ganong and Coleman, 2014). The use of in-depth interviews was also seen as a suitable means to explore a first-hand experience of peer mentoring, as it is a useful technique for understanding how individuals construct their experiences, allowing them to explain their perceptions and understanding of mentoring in their own terms and enable the context of their meanings to become more apparent (Byrne, 2004; Jones, 1985; May, 2011). Semi-structured interviews also offer a greater degree of flexibility, allow for further probing questions and can help generate new meanings from the respondent's perspective (Byrne, 2004; Davies, 2000; DeShong, 2013; Fielding and Thomas, 2008; Mason, 2002; May, 2011).

The use of semi-structured and in-depth interviews as a research method is also consistent with a feminist approach, as it places the woman's experiences at the

centre of the study (Davies, 2000). This approach also emphasises the importance of a more equal relationship between the interviewer and participant in order to increase the validity of the research (Westmarland, 2001). For my own interviews with women, I attempted to adopt a similar approach as that adhered to by Oakley (1981) and Cotterill (1992), who advocate the importance of reciprocity during interviews as well as adapting to meet distinct needs of participants where necessary (Cotterill, 1992). Oakley also emphasises the importance of recognising the researcher's role within the study, a reflexive practice that my research has also taken into account. A more concentrated look at different concepts for interviewing women is given at a later point within this chapter.

Whilst interviewing was regarded as the most suitable method for this type of research, there are notable issues that can arise from this mode of data generation. Different factors that are present between the interviewer and participant, such as age, ethnicity and gender, can influence the interaction and affect how participants may answer certain questions (Byrne, 2004; Mason, 2002). As my research involved speaking to women from varying backgrounds and ethnicities, it would be near impossible to locate a single suitable researcher where these characteristics would be equally matched.

Although attempts were made to avoid questions that may have caused discomfort to participants, parts of the research interview focused on areas of past experiences in prison as well as future hopes and aspirations, which meant there was some potential for questions to cause a level of distress to some women. Parker and Ulrich (1990) suggest that when undertaking sensitive research, certain strategies should be employed in order to limit any emotional distress from the participants that may occur. They suggest allowing the participant a chance to express any emotion that arises during the interview and the importance of indicating 'acceptance' of this emotional response (Parker and Ulrich, 1990: 32). This method is also advised by Laslett and Rapopart (1975) who state that 'being responsive to, rather than seeking to avoid respondent reactions' during the collection of sensitive data will allow for a more meaningful

interview (Laslett and Rapoport, 1975: 968). My research has taken this into account by adopting a semi-structured, conversational approach; whereby I was able to respond and interact with participants, answering any questions that arose during the interview. Parker and Ulrich also stress the importance of developing 'awareness of signals or cues' from participants that may indicate discomfort or distress and reacting appropriately (Parker and Ulrich, 1990: 32). During a few of the interviews, particularly those with women in the drug rehabilitation area of the prison, some women would become emotional when discussing their experiences in prison and would occasionally cry or become angry or agitated. During these interviews specifically, I would make a visual display of stopping the interview by ceasing to take notes and placing any papers I had been holding on the table to indicate my attention was focused on them. I would ask the interviewee if she was happy to continue or would prefer to end the interview early if I felt she was too distressed, then refer to staff if I felt any further concerns. My attempt to handle emotions and difficulties during the interview stage is discussed in greater detail with reference to a research diary further on within the methods chapter.

3.3.1. Recording the interview

Another concern when conducting qualitative research in prison relates to the digital recording of the interviews. From the outset, senior staff members within the prison were not compliant with the use of a recording device and after several attempts at negotiating the use of the Dictaphone it was deemed too great a security risk. Instead, I took detailed field notes throughout my time in the prison and during the interviews. I then transcribed each one immediately following the interview whilst I could recall the conversation and to minimise the loss of any key data. This process was considerably more difficult than digitally recording the interview; the notes were often lengthy and at times difficult to re-read. I was also conscious of the impact that writing notes would have on engaging with my respondent and building a rapport during the interview as it was harder to maintain eye contact and fully engage with participants. Allowing

the conversation to flow naturally was also difficult at times when having to ask interviewees to pause in order for me to accurately note down information or repeat verbatim certain words or phrases. However, there were some beneficial aspects to collecting the data by hand; the presence of a recording device could lead (understandably) to some women not speaking as openly about their experiences or feeling distrustful of how the data would be used. The use of a recording device could also create a level of formality to the interview, or be reminiscent of previous police interview procedures, and subsequently intimidate the women being interviewed. Harvey (2008) reiterates this idea, suggesting that not using a Dictaphone within a secure environment may be interpreted as a measure of 'trust and respect' (Harvey, 2008: 79). The use of note taking also slowed the pace of the interview, allowing women more time to become comfortable.

3.3.2. Gaining and maintaining trust

'The idea of acquiring an 'inside' understanding… is a powerful central concept for understanding the purpose of qualitative inquiry'

*(*Schwandt, 2000: 102)

Along with gaining access to the prison site, building a rapport and attempting to establish a degree of trust with the research participants is another potential obstacle to be managed. I wanted to have an insight into the women's individual time in prison, and although the research questions were formulated to avoid touching on distressing or upsetting topics, the majority of women in the prison had experienced many different traumas which made avoiding sensitive topics difficult at times. Therefore, gaining the prisoners' trust and ensuring they felt safe and respected was essential in order to develop an insightful look at their experience and understanding of how mentoring impacts on their time in prison. I attempted to achieve this degree of trust by disclosing to the women prior to interviewing them that I was not affiliated with the prison in any way and explaining my personal reasons behind why I was undertaking the research, as

well as the ethical stipulations around anonymity and confidentiality. Becker (1967) states that gaining the trust of interviewees requires assertion to participants that what they disclose is important, will be reported as accurately as possible and will ensure their anonymity and safety is upheld (Becker, 1967).

As well as establishing trust with the prisoners being interviewed, building a strong rapport with staff was also essential. As I spent the majority of my time in the prison in the education wing, I managed to build a good network of gatekeepers to rely on for any questions or advice and was able to plan my research schedule based on their information about which women were mentors or had been part of a mentoring programme.

3.3.3. Establishing a rapport

Similar to the notion of gaining trust during the interview process, building rapport during prison interviews is also central to the success of the interview. Jewkes and Wright (2016) state that rapport could be seen as a form of reciprocity; with regard to prison based research, reciprocity is seen as a significant exchange of knowledge and time. Constructing a solid rapport is essential in order to extract more in-depth information from participants, therefore attention must be given to word choice as well as body language to help prevent those being researched from feeling threatened or inferior. LaRossa, Bennett and Gelles (1981) suggest there is an unavoidable power difference that exists between a researcher and participants, which could be seen as heightened when researching a vulnerable population such as female prisoners (LaRossa, Bennett and Gelles, 1981). When researching from a feminist framework this concept of structural power difference is recognised and taken into account, with efforts made to attempt to limit or lessen this difference. In order to try and achieve this, I avoided any use of academic or overly complicated wording and would attempt to have relaxed conversation before the interviews to try and help the participants feel at ease. I made sure to clarify I

was not associated with the prison and was therefore not in a position of authority over them.

Although care was taken when constructing the research questions so as to minimise feelings of distress, talking about sensitive topics was unavoidable at times. Building some form of connection and level of trust with the women was therefore crucial as the more comfortable and at ease the women felt, the more intimate and detailed their responses were to questions about their lives. This idea is reinforced by Jewkes and Wright (2016), who state that once a 'genuine rapport' is established, the research participant is able to 'talk freely and disclose information that they are not generally able to in their everyday lives' (p.667).

3.4. A gender-informed approach

As the research is focused solely on the experiences of female prisoners and women recently released from prison, it was imperative to employ a methodology that recognised gendered differences and situates the female experience at the centre of the research. With this in mind, this study adopts a gender-informed approach to the research by focusing on female experiences of mentoring and relationships and placing the women's opinions, insights and struggles as the core focus of the study (Belknap, 1996; Oakley, 1981). Whilst this study is not classed as feminist research as such, classical feminist schools of thought largely influence the gender-focused approach that is adopted. The majority of feminist critiques of early criminological theories suggest that a large body of research can be criticised for its depiction of gendered stereotypes and the lack of consideration attributed to the socialisation of women in society (Belknap, 1996; Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1992; Smart, 1976). This study also takes into account the theory of intersectionality as key in highlighting the interrelated inequalities of gender, race, class and identity for women in a prison environment (Potter, 2013). Potter's (2013) explanation of the importance of gaining an understanding of the differences faced by women and their experiences of inequality are based on social positions, such as the role of

mentor or mentee in prison, and is a central idea to this research study (Potter, 2013). Intersectionality is also a critical aspect of feminist thinking in relation to assumptions about gender roles and identities, Shields (2008) explains how this perspective indicates the way in which 'the individual's social identities profoundly influence one's beliefs about and experiences of gender' (301). This theory is therefore significant in relation to how peer mentors and mentees conceptualised their own personal identities in prison in relation to mentoring roles. Qualitative research methods, such as those employed within this study, were also deemed a more appropriate method for research that takes into account an intersectionality framework (Shields, 2008). Before discussing how and why this research adopts this gendered outline, it is important to discuss how this is contextualised alongside a feminist approach to research and what this approach involves.

3.4.1. Researching women

Within criminological studies, women as a social group are often invisible or ineffectively represented, and as a discipline it is often solely concerned with representing male interests and activities (Hammersley, 1992; Oakley, 2005; Smart, 1976). Carol Smart (1976) reaffirms this idea, arguing that within criminology discourse, early research was previously based on inadequate perceptions of women which subsequently led to distorted theories about female criminality (Smart, 1976; Stanley and Wise, 1983). Traditional debates surrounding women's offending have been criticised as 'contradictory and value-laden', with the majority of research during the 19th and 20th century seen to be motivated by sexist social ideas embedded in gendered stereotypes (Holsinger, 2000: 25). Previously, very limited research had focused on the notion of gendered differences, particularly on the experiences of women and girls, and when this concept was included it was often underplayed, or the experiences of males were regarded as a standardised viewpoint (Hammersley, 1992). Hammersley (1992) points out that the effects of gendered distinctions on the research process was 'completely absent' prior to the influence of feminist thought (Hammersley, 1992: 191). This is one of the key reasons as to why

aspects of this study draw on feminist ideologies in order to accurately undertake a gendered approach to the research. Female criminality was originally largely attributed to biological and psychological factors outside of a woman's control (Campbell, 1981). It can be argued that there is still a continued belief that the phrase 'feminism' is synonymous with women, whilst 'criminology' is synonymous with men, leading to the marginalisation of feminist theories with regard to the criminal justice system (Hudson, 2010). Feminists therefore critique social science research by claiming that research 'ought to be *on* and *for* women, and should be carried out *by* women' (Stanley and Wise, 1933: 30), a process which my study has adopted by researching women with the intention to provide data about how important a mentoring relationship can be to support the rehabilitation and desistance process for female offenders.

The concept of a distinctly feminist methodology is a debate addressed by many feminist scholars. Sarah Harding (1988) proposes that in order to adapt a specifically feminist methodology, it is important to distinguish between what is meant by methods, methodology and epistemology as the terms are often intertwined (Harding, 1988; Rutherford, 2011). The *method* is used to describe data collection, however within feminist research the way in which the methods are carried out is distinctive. Harding advocates listening 'carefully' to women's descriptions and explanations of their lives and 'critically' to traditional social ideas about women's lives (Harding, 1988; 3). The methods for my own study, as outlined above, are based on this idea of 'careful' listening and focusing on female perceptions; this was done by repeating any words or phrases I was unsure of back to the interview participant to ensure the most accurate account of the interview could be recorded. The *methodology* discusses the 'theory and analysis of how research should or does proceed' (Campbell and Schram, 1995: 87). Many feminist researchers suggest the power dynamics that may be evident during the research should be carefully considered, with the researcher working to minimise the distance between the researcher and participant as much as possible (Rutherford, 2011). It could be argued that within a prison setting the element of power dynamics is even more significant, with this in mind I attempted to limit this distance by dressing in casual clothing with minimal make

up and ensured all research questions were straightforward and did not use complicated or academic wording.

Discussions of feminist methodologies often encourage feminist researchers to pursue an 'egalitarian research process', characterised by 'authenticity, reciprocity and intersubjectivity' between the researcher and participants (Stacey, 1988: 22). An ethnographic approach is often judged the most appropriate for feminist research (Duelli Klein, 1983; Stacey, 1988; Stanley and Wise, 1983). Stacey (1988) explains how this method draws on resources of connection and empathy as well as providing greater respect for their research participants (Stacey, 1988). The methodology of the study is informed by e*pistemologies*, or 'theories of knowledge' (Harding, 1988: 4). Harding suggests that traditional epistemologies are written from a male point of view, excluding the possibility of women as 'agents of knowledge' (Harding, 1988: 4). With this in mind, my study attempted to encapsulate this concept when investigating the data from a gender-focused research perspective, attempting to uphold a feminist-informed research motive by studying women in an effort to 'resist barriers to women's emancipation' (Riley *et al,* 2003: 13). My own research is therefore attentive to the language used by women to describe their experiences of a mentoring relationship with the view to determine how significant this form of rehabilitation programme is for female offenders.

Other key aspects of my research also incorporate specific elements of what has been described by Davis as core features of a 'feminist' research perspective; a female researcher makes all decisions about the research process; all respondents are female; and the subject of the research looks at issues from a gendered perspective (Davies, 2000). As the significance of the researcher relationship is also a key aspect of a feminist approach (Oakley, 1974; Harding, 1987), I felt this was an interesting parallel to my study's preoccupation with the relationship between peer mentor and mentee. Feminist research places importance on 'listening to, recording and understanding women's own descriptions and accounts' (Maynard, 2008: 465), which is a central aspect of the study as it is interested in understanding the mentoring process in the words of

the women who experienced it. Being receptive to what and how respondents answer questions during interviews is regarded as a key aspect of a qualitative research approach. Mason suggests that we should be responsive to what interviewees say, and to their ways of understanding, which underpins much of the 'qualitative' critique of structure survey interview methods, and also highlights why this method was felt to be more sufficient for this form of data collection during the study (Mason, 2002: 231).

This concept also links to the notion of paying particular attention to how women specifically communicate their experiences and opinions to other women. This is an especially relevant idea in my own research as mentoring as a practice is largely concerned with advocating intimate conversations between the mentor and mentee. Paget (1981) states that 'women-to-women conversations' are more beneficial for women in relation to developing ideas and therefore women are argued as being better prepared than men to use the interviews as a 'search procedure' whilst being able to 'construct meanings together' (Paget, 1981: 65). It is therefore necessary for the researcher to incorporate personal involvement in the research rather than maintaining a boundary between researcher and interviewer (Devault, 1990; Oakley, 1981). This research approach is also similar to key strategies used in mentoring, such as the use of female-only mentors, listening carefully to women's accounts, and active engagement between mentors and mentees.

3.4. 2. Interviewing women

Despite interviews being a successful means for data collection, there is much debate regarding the role of the interviewer in the research process (Byrne, 2004; Oakley, 1981). For Ann Oakley, a classic social science interview adopts a 'predominantly masculine model of sociology and society' (Oakley, 1981; 205), which is not fit for purpose in the case of interviewing women. The traditional research interview is therefore regarded as 'an instrument of data collection' (Oakley, 1981; 37) whereby the interview-interviewee relationship is confined to an impersonal exchange with the end-goal of data collection. Oakley states

therefore that 'both interviewer and interviewee are thus depersonalised participants in the research process' (Oakley, 1981: 37). The typical role of the interviewee in this instance is in a subordinate position, bringing about a power imbalance between interviewer and respondent (Oakley, 2005). Typical sociological interview methods can also be seen to exclude the nature of 'feelings' and 'emotions'; Hochschild (1975) suggests that emotions are regarded as 'some irrelevancy or impediment to getting things done', which coincides with the traditional values of a 'male culture' (Hochschild, 1975: 281) and for Smith (1974) who states that women 'appear only as they are relevant to a world governed by male principles and interests' (Smith, 1974: 346). Feminists consequently stress the need for a 'non-sexist methodology', one that does not ignore sexual divisions or the experiences of women (Roberts, 1981: 15). For this study, the element of emotions in the interviews was crucial, particularly when researching with women in prison. In particular when talking about the construction of relationships, the emotion and word choice used by peer mentors was significant in conveying their understanding of the mentoring relationship and their feelings towards the women they mentored, this issue is discussed further below.

Oakley (1981) suggests a 'normal' research interview is difficult to undertake without the issue of a hierarchical relationship forming, whereby the interviewer assumes a degree of power and control over the interviewee (Oakley, 1981). For Oakley, and others, a central concept of traditional interviewing is a contradiction in that interviewees are seen as 'objects of study or sources of data', but cannot give credible data without a degree of 'humane treatment', it is therefore key to strike a balance between detachment and 'rapport' (Denzin, 1970: 186). Oakley goes on to discuss her reasons for digressing from traditional interview ethics in her research with women; firstly in an attempt to change the 'traditional cultural and academic treatment of women', she emphasises the importance of bringing their experiences and opinions to the foreground of the study and ultimately doing research *for* those being researched (Oakley, 1981: 48). She refers to the concept of 'sisterhood' as a significant model for women when reconsidering the basis of their relationships with each other, an idea that

is particularly significant to my own research as I am interested in exploring whether this level of intimacy in a mentoring relationship can develop and how important this degree of connection can be. Oakley also stresses that there is no chance of 'intimacy without reciprocity' (Oakley, 1981: 49), advocating a collaborative approach to the research interview, whereby both parties are engaged and responsive to one another. This is another principle that underlies my own research as there is a similar dynamic seen between mentor and mentee in that the mentoring relationship can become more significant if both parties are making a conscious effort to establish a deeper connection (Weaver, 2013).

3.4 3. Reflexivity in research

'To be reflexive is to have an on-going conversation about the experience while simultaneously living in the moment'

(Hertz, 1997: viii)

Within qualitative research practices, the figure of the researcher is central to the collection and interpretation of data, as well as influential in participant responses (Finlay, 2002). Finlay suggests, 'research is thus regarded as a joint product of the participants, the researcher, and their relationship: It is co-constituted' (Finlay, 2002: 531). Reflexivity in research involves the acknowledgement of the researcher's influence on the research process and the nature of the researcher's role (Byrne, 2004), and is crucial in demonstrating what factors have contributed to the final production of knowledge (Hudson, 2000). Wilkinson (1988) defines a reflexive approach to research as 'disciplined self-reflection' (Wilkinson: 493) indicating a 'distance and unity at once', and allowing the researcher to be conscious of oneself as both 'subject and object', as well as the process that creates the awareness of both (Wasserfall, 1997: 154). Reflexivity requires the researcher to take into consideration how the research process is organised around factors such as gender, dominance, class and age (Burman, 1990).

It has been argued by feminist criminologists that reflexivity in research can improve the research process as it promotes being open to and aware of the inherent limitations and preconceptions that exist within all research studies. Devault (1990) suggests that a researcher's own experiences as a woman can add value to the interview (Devault, 1990). She goes on to discuss her own research with women, which involves noticing 'ambiguity and problems of expression' during interviews and drawing on personal experiences to 'fill in' what has not been completely said (Devault, 1990: 105). Similarly Harding (1987) states that in order to limit the degree of hierarchy in an interview setting, the researcher should be included in the research, 'the best feminist analysis…insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter' (Harding, 1987: 9). Reflexivity therefore allows for a process of self-awareness within research that can illuminate any power dynamics (Riley *et al,* 2003). This study has adopted a similar approach as Riley, Schouten and Cahill (2003), using reflexive accounts of the research experience to produce new ways of understanding how the mentoring relationship is developed and conducted.

A reflexive approach is also used in order to limit the 'methodological difficulty' of researching intimate relationships, as these types of studies are often conducted from 'specific, established perspectives' (Gillies, 2003: 18). In order to overcome this issue, the study includes excerpts from a personal research diary detailing my own experiences of interviewing in prison and volunteering as a mentor in a community organisation. This will be discussed, with examples, further on in this chapter.

Research undertaken within an institutional setting such as a prison, can also benefit from a reflexive approach. Drake and Harvey (2013) suggest that a methodical examination of the 'emotional dimensions' of research can produce a more in-depth understanding of different settings and the way in which research is carried out (Drake and Harvey, 2013: 490). Whilst many previous researchers have discussed the difficulty in gaining access to prison, the 'daily negotiations' of access once inside are often not commented on (Drake and Harvey, 2013:

491). As discussed previously, this was a significant issue across the fieldwork period due to changes of staff and difficulty maintaining contact with central gatekeepers when not on the prison site. Drake and Harvey discuss the struggle of getting to know staff members due to issues with staff rotations and shortages, as well as the challenging task of earning trust from individuals during the study, particularly research participants (Drake and Harvey, 2013). Previous research studies within prison also comment on the difficulty of defining the researcher role (Liebling and Arnold, 2004). The researcher will be required to adapt their position when going between staff and prisoners and depending on varying situations. The way in which the researcher deals with these challenges and the role undertaken within prison can account for the 'high emotional demand' of prison research (Drake and Harvey, 2013: 493). Whilst I felt my role in the prison was easily recognised and understood by staff and prisoners, I did occasionally feel unsure of where my role of observer and researcher should end when encountering women who were in need of help or staff behaviour I did not agree with. This idea is brought out through excerpts of my prison research diary and further discussion below.

3.4.4. The research diary

Reflexive research is commonly aided by the use of field notes and reflexive diaries, both of which I used whilst conducting research at the prison site. Keeping the research diary allows the researcher to indicate how personal 'experiences, values, and positions of privilege' influence the research process, research interests and the representation of findings (Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton, 2001: 325). Following interviews with each women I made a note of any discussion point or observation, whether that be of body language, staff interaction or interview locations, that stood out or seemed worth investigating further. I also used the research diary to record my feelings or particular experiences of that day, especially when conducting research that had been more difficult or had created uncertainty about the role I was undertaking within the prison;

'I am unsure of what to do or say that is meaningful when a woman asks for my help with something outside of the prison- today a woman asked me if I could help her with housing when she left, she explained that she had 'put herself back in prison' as she 'had nothing'; no possessions, family or housing to go back to. I find it hard to know if I am giving the correct advice or offering any reassurance that will make a difference'.

(Research Diary extract, 20/04/2016)

Occasionally the research diary was also an effective means to offload about anything from an interview that was more emotionally challenging to hear:

'I feel emotional after speaking to a woman this morning and hearing about how helpless she feels. She has been in and out of prison all her life. Listening to her talk about 'burying five members of her family from behind bars' is difficult to hear, especially when she describes the loss of her young son. She became tearful when discussing how she felt her life had 'turned out' and it was difficult to continue the interview after hearing this so I decided to stop early. It felt heart breaking to listen to and I feel very unhelpful and disingenuous trying to tell her things can improve for her with the kind of life she has had so far'.

(Research Diary extract, 28/04/2016)

The role of the researcher and the interview interaction can be a complex relationship in the majority of qualitative research studies, however when the participants are a vulnerable population this becomes increasingly more complicated. Scheurich (1997) states that the interactions between researcher and participant are impossible to be captured through the transcripts alone due to the complex nature of the 'conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, fears, powers, desires and needs' by both the interviewer and respondent which can be difficult to capture and classify succinctly (Scheurich, 1997; 73). The use of extracts from my research diary are therefore put forward to help articulate some of my own 'thoughts, feelings, fears' and to help illuminate those of the

women I spoke with. Ortlipp (2008) states that using the diary in this way allows the research process to be more evident and gives greater insight into how the data was later interpreted and analysed.

'I spoke to a woman today who was visibly in pain throughout the (short) interview, she said she had an illness which meant she struggled to sit down, she appeared fragile and emotional describing what her time in prison had been like… She said she often felt suicidal and described using the Samaritans phone service to try and get some help, but she felt as though the person she spoke to 'seemed bored and uninterested in her', she feels like she has no one to turn to and that she could do with more support day-to-day'.

(Research Diary extract, 14/11/2015)

I also kept a diary detailing my experiences as a volunteer mentor for the *Brighton Inspire Project.* This mentoring role was undertaken prior to conducting any research interviews in order to gain a first-hand understanding of how mentoring was used as a form of rehabilitative programme. This was a useful research tool in terms of assisting me to consider my role as both researcher and mentor and the subsequent insight and difficulties this brought to the research as a whole. I began this role in November 2015 before starting the fieldwork stage of research and then began interviews with community mentors once commencing the research phase within the prison. The first mentee I was paired with, Claire[6], was struggling to cope with a criminal conviction and the possibility of being sentenced to prison over a violent offence. During our sessions Claire was often tearful and highly anxious about her future, and struggled to move on from experiences of abuse and substance misuse in her past. I found the experience of mentoring highly fulfilling but not without its challenges, especially the feelings of inadequacy at being able to fulfil the role effectively and regularly feeling overwhelmed by responsibility in a role I did not always feel I was qualified enough for. The extracts below are from reflective diary I kept during some of the initial contact I had with my first mentee;

[6] Any names mentioned are pseudonyms used to uphold the anonymity of the people discussed

'I initially met Claire during a session with Linda, a project manager, and she appeared to be a very troubled, anxious woman who was difficult to read; I am not sure how she felt about my presence in the room at first, although she was open to discuss her feelings and problems'

(Mentor Diary, 05/11/2015)

'Claire talked to me today about the problems she is facing with her husband (who is part of the reason for her conviction). I think there is definitely an element of abuse in the relationship, although this was not something she brought up during our conversation… She was shaking and crying today and was making an effort to remain composed, it has made me feel unsure if I have the right skills to be doing this…'

(Mentor Diary, 05/11/2015)

Prior to one of our mentoring sessions I had written the following extract about my feelings regarding our next meeting;

'*I am feeling anxious about our next meeting on Thursday, I don't know if I am going to be able to help her of have the right answers for her about her day in court. I feel like the hour* [session] *might also be difficult, as I don't feel we have that much in common and so the conversation might not come easily?*

(Mentor Diary, 19/11/2015)

'Being there [at the Women's Centre in Brighton] *felt depressing today, as does the prospect of continuing these difficult sessions regularly. I talked to Claire at length today about different types of help she could access when she was feeling particularly low, and she touched on having feelings of suicide at the idea of having to go to prison. Being able to go home at the end of it, away from Brighton, has made me feel better'*

(Mentor Diary, 26/11/2015)

I had subsequently reflected on the session, which had felt very difficult due to Claire feeling anxious and distressed and reflected once again on my ability to properly to undertake the mentoring role successfully. It is interesting to reflect now on how daunting the role and participation in the programme had been at times and how I had found some aspects difficult to manage. My personal experiences and feelings about the mentoring role were echoed by a number of peer and community mentors when discussing the more challenging aspects of mentoring, which is discussed at greater length within the Findings chapters.

3.4.5. Reciprocity and the research relationship

The significance of the researcher and participant relationship is another area that is commonly discussed within feminist literature. As explained previously, Ann Oakley's (1981) perspective on interviewing women has been significant for guiding subsequent feminist research, suggesting that an effective interview approach with women should refrain from creating a hierarchical relationship between interviewer and participant (Cotterill, 1992; Oakley, 1981). A large majority of feminist researchers advocate adopting a 'participatory model' with the interview being an interactive experience (Coterrill, 1992: 595). Duelli Klein (1983) reaffirms this position, stating that women who study women should engage in 'an interactive process' without an artificial 'subject/object split' between the researcher and participant (Duelli Klein, 1983: 88).

Despite the strengths of Oakley's approach, there are some problems with the idea of forming a close relationship during a research interview. It could be argued as naïve to assume that all women are able to identify with each other simply on the basis of a shared gender, as it is not able to override other relational barriers such as class, race, age and status. Cotterill (1992: 595) states 'female oppression varies in both nature and degree… it is simplistic to assume that all women identify with each other on that basis alone'. Cotterill also discusses her own experience of research with women, looking at maternal relationships established by marriage. Despite advocating Oakley's approach, she

found that not all participants felt comfortable talking openly simply because of shared gender, contradicting Oakley's notion that 'gender socialisation reduces social distance' (Cotterill, 1992: 600). All women have distinct understandings and experiences about what it is to be female which will consequently influence how they interact during a research interview.

Other feminist researchers suggest that forming a friendship with an interviewee can also complicate the research relationship and impact on the quality of data as the researcher may feel certain obligations towards the participant, which could subsequently limit what aspects of the interview they decide to report (Hammersley, 1979). Ribbens (1989) suggests that interviewing is a 'complex social encounter' (Ribbens, 1989: 579) and therefore maintaining certain boundaries to the relationship is essential. Wise (1987) reiterates this position, stating that real friendship can only be possible once the research relationship has ended (Wise, 1987). During her own research with women, Ribbens comments on the difficulty of establishing a truly reciprocal relationship: some of the women she interviewed remarked how easy it was to talk to her and that they felt they now 'know each other' (587). However, Ribbens remarks that she did not feel the same way; the interviewees had opened up about their personal lives but Ribbens had not done the same (Ribbens, 1989: 587). I could relate well to this idea during my own interviews with women in prison; often they would tell me quite detailed and intimate stories about their lives and despite wanting to have a reciprocal relationship during the interview, I was not able to talk about my own life in that same detail. This was predominantly due to the constraints of prison security policies and in part attempting to maintain a professional boundary between researcher and interviewee. The degree of reciprocity during interviews with women is therefore a difficult issue as without a certain level of emotional engagement women may not feel they are relating to the researcher as a person and may not feel able to divulge as much as they would if a connection was established (Ribbens, 1989).

Stacey (1988) also disputes some aspects of Oakley's research process, suggesting there to be a fundamental contradiction between traditional feminist

principles and ethnographic research methods (Stacey, 1988). Stacey states that ethnographic research 'depends upon human relationship, engagement and attachment', subsequently placing research participants at risk of manipulation or betrayal by the researcher due to the sensitive or intimate nature of the information that is divulged during interviews (Stacey, 1988: 22). For Stacey, despite best efforts to avoid exploiting participants it is seen as 'unavoidable' due to the inherent inequality of the relationship, she states that, 'the lives, loves, and tragedies that fieldwork informants share with a researcher are ultimately data' (Stacey, 1988:23). Despite attempts to limit the degree of inequality in the research relationship, Wise (1987) comments that this is an inevitable outcome as the final written product will always be the researcher's version of reality and structured by a researcher's purpose (Wise, 1987). This study has attempted to limit this inequality as far as possible by considering how the research could benefit those involved, by placing women's experiences at the core of the research and by discussing the data in the language of the participants.

3.5. Ethical considerations

Before undertaking the first stage of research in prison, ethical approval was sought from Royal Holloway, University of London. An application for research was made to NOMS in August 2015 using their Integrated Research Application System. This process can often be quite lengthy and, following a few adjustments to the research proposal, I was granted access to HMP/YOI Bronzefield in October 2015. In an attempt to begin fieldwork as soon as possible and to limit the ethical procedure process, researching in one prison site was deemed an efficient way to conduct the research as this would mean negotiating access with only one site. Contact was made with the prison's Head of Learning and Skills and the Head of Education through my supervisor, Professor Rosie Meek, in order to help facilitate access to the site and the research procedure. Following a formal letter to the prison Director detailing the process and purpose of my research, access was granted to the prison and I commenced my interviews late October 2015.

A principal feature of upholding ethical considerations within research is the protection of vulnerable research participants (Israel and Gelsthorpe, 2016). This concept could be regarded as particularly relevant when undertaking research with a female prison population. As the research involved interviews with vulnerable women, all efforts were made to safeguard them from any questions or situations that could cause distress. One way this was done was by ensuring all the interview questions were as non-invasive as possible. As mentoring focuses on a strengths-based approach (Bloom and Covington, 2000; Covington, 2001) the research adopted the same positive framework, with the majority of interview questions focusing on conveying an understanding of whether, and how, mentoring has been a positive influence rather than reflecting on the women's offending behaviour or backgrounds prior to being incarcerated. As the research cohort was comprised of vulnerable adults, prior to commencing each interview I also reiterated the information provided on their information sheet (see Appendix I) that their participation was entirely voluntary and they had no obligation to partake in the study in order to further minimise feelings of coercion or manipulation in taking part in the study. A full copy of the consent form supplied to peer mentors and mentees can be found in Appendix II.

The second phase of the research was undertaken with volunteer and paid mentors in the community who were involved in mentoring female offenders recently released from prison. As this research phase was conducted in the community it was considerably easier to gain consent for the research. Following research into female-focused community support, contact was established with two women's centres and a registered charity, all of which offered mentoring support to women released from prison in the community. *Pecan*'s *Moving On* project, the *Brighton Inspire Project* and mentors at *Catch 22* all aimed to provide mentoring support to women as a form of resettlement programme to offer practical and emotional assistance in order to facilitate reintegration back into the community. In total 7 interviews were undertaken with women across these three organisations. A copy of the information and consent form given to participants prior to the interview can be located in the Appendices (see

Appendix VI for the community mentor information sheet; see Appendix VII for the consent form for community mentors).

Maintaining confidentiality is another key part of ensuring ethical standards are upheld, as well as a crucial factor in building trust and protecting participants (Baez, 2002). Kaiser (2009) suggests that confidentiality should be addressed during three key stages of the research process: data collection, data 'cleaning' and the final data dissemination (Kaiser, 2009). During the initial data collection, all identifiable characteristics were altered and all respondents discussed under a pseudonym to maintain anonymity, in both the research write up and transcripts (Byrne, 2004). The interviews undertaken with third sector mentors were all audio recorded, whilst field notes were taken during prison-based interviews. Both transcriptions and audio recordings have been securely stored and all recorded interviews deleted once transcriptions were written up, with any identifying details removed.

Prior to undertaking the interviews, all participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the purpose and intended outcomes of the research. For the women in prison extra attention was given to the wording used to ensure it was straightforward and time was also given for any questions. All participants were informed that they were able to stop the interview at any point or pull out of the research study (up to three months following the interview). Each participant also signed a consent form and was given details of how to contact me should they have any follow up questions or concerns about the interview. All prison interviews were undertaken in different locations within the prison, but predominantly within the education unit in any available classrooms. Interviews conducted with community organisations were done in a range of public places, such as local café's, or at offices within the organisation.

3.5.1. Carrying keys

Earle (2014) discusses a further ethical and methodological issue of undertaking prison research, the question of whether or not to draw keys to allow for easier

access and movement around the prison estate (Earle, 2014). A predicament of drawing keys is that they 'mark you out' from prisoners, causing possible distrust from research participants and denying what Earle describes as the 'central element of prisoners' experience' by having the ability to pass through the doors that they are unable to (Earle, 2014: 430). Jewkes (2002) also suggests that prisoners may perceive the key-holding researcher in a formal position akin to prison staff or professionals and it could serve to further highlight unequal power dynamics.

Despite these possible drawbacks, from the outset I had decided to carry keys as a means to have greater freedom to set my own research schedule and to reduce impacting on staff time. Jewkes and Wright (2016) state how carrying keys can 'reduce the institutional burden' that the researcher feels they present whilst in the prison (Jewkes and Wright, 2016: 668). As I was also often moving from different areas of the prison, having my own key set allowed me to undertake the research in several areas more quickly. During my time researching in the prison I felt the freedom of movement it gave me, along with a degree of credibility by members of staff, was more significant than any obvious negatives. Whilst it may not have been the case, carrying keys and being able to move the women to different parts of the prison for the interview did not appear to have impacted on building a rapport with them or affect the interview process. If anything, the women, like the staff, seemed to view my presence in the prison as more credible because I was given the opportunity to carry keys.

3.5.2. Constraints of the research

The findings within this study are consistent with the experiences of the studies research participants (peer mentors and mentees, and the mentors within the community), and do not necessarily represent the experiences of mentoring within other organisations or prison populations. Within the community setting, one of the key challenges of the research study was the difficulty in recruiting women who had been mentored through community organisations. This was predominantly due to the vulnerability of this particular cohort of women and it

was felt that pursuing respondents through the links established with each organisation could be both problematic and perceived as encroaching on the support the mentees received through the different organisations. Despite initially contacting two women through the *Brighton Inspire Project*, both women later declined to do the interview. As a result I was only able to gather data from community *mentors* when looking at the benefits of programmes within this setting, and subsequently was not able to record first-hand accounts of how women experienced mentoring post-release from prison and in the community. Despite this being a slight setback, the data gathered from these interviews was able to inform an understanding of how these programmes operate and areas of need that were not being met successfully, allowing the research to guide subsequent measures for improvement. The intention of this research was to provide an insight into how an area of the criminal justice system, both in a female prison and the rehabilitation network within the community in England, conducts mentoring for women specifically and the perceived outcomes of this programme within these settings.

The study was also small in scale; however it was felt that enough interviews were conducted to the point where data saturation was reached; this is thought to have occurred when enough information is obtained to conduct analysis, different methods of collecting new data have been achieved and when further coding of the data is no longer possible (Fusch and Ness, 2015). However, although sufficient data was gathered, the discrepancy between the number of peer mentor participants and mentee participants during the prison stage of the interviews could be argued as a limitation of the study, as a much larger number of mentors were interviewed in comparison to mentees. Although efforts were made to speak with an equal ratio of mentors and mentees, logistics of the prison, as well as research time constraints, meant that this was often difficult.

As well as the difficulty in locating participants, a number of the mentees allocated to me to interview by the prison staff stated that they did not in fact have a mentor and so did not want to continue with the interview. Missing respondents was also an issue due to the nature of the prison regime; other

respondents put forward to me for an interview were either not available when I was visiting the prison or had recently been released. The restricted number of participants is a consequence of external constraints to the prison, such as those enforced by the National Offender Management Service, which dictated the number of prisons that could be entered and the length of time allowed within each establishment.

3.6. Methods of analysis

Following data collection, each interview was transcribed as soon as it was completed to maximise accuracy. This process enabled me as a researcher to become fully immersed in the research and allowed for the 'thought process about patterns and connections' found within the data to begin more promptly (Guthrie, 2010: 160). As there is no single distinct 'feminist methodology' for analysis, it was important to use an approach best suited to answering the research questions (Hankivsky, 1999). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data from both stages of the research study, allowing for a comparison between the volunteer mentors, peer mentors and the mentees, and their experience of how mentoring has an impact, the nature of the mentoring relationship, and possible outcomes of the programme.

Thematic analysis is classified as a 'foundational method' for qualitative analysis approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 2) and is a process of 'encoding qualitative information' through identifying, examining and reporting various themes within the data (Boyatzis, 1998: vii). Once each interview is transcribed, codes or phrases were developed that function to label different sections of the data and these are subsequently used to develop a deeper meaning (Boyatzis, 1998). This method is seen as suitable for the type of data recorded as the study's objective is to capture the views of the women involved, thematic analysis therefore allows for a more detailed and complex investigation of how mentors and mentees describe the mentoring relationship in their own words. Thematic analysis also

allows for a description of the data as well as an interpretation of different aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998).

Strauss and Corbin's (1990) *open-coding technique* was then used to code the subsequent data. This process describes the method whereby all transcripts are read through once complete and notes are made on any significant and reoccurring themes, in order to locate meaning in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Tracy, 2013). This approach allowed for key ideas and emerging themes around the mentoring relationship to become apparent. Coding data allows for the process of identifying certain information that either belongs to or represents a certain idea or phenomenon (Tracy, 2013). This method was also employed when thinking of new questions and strategies for the research, 'as the aim of the coding is to open up the inquiry' (Strauss, 1987: 29). During the analysis phase of the study, close attention was also given to the language used by participants, with a focus on the specific wording used and the way in which relationships were described. The overarching themes of the research were then identified and discussed in relation to the original research questions within four key findings chapters. The findings outlined were as follows:

1. Chapter Four: The principles and practices of mentoring programmes, and looking at how 'quality' mentoring can be defined and understood.

2. Chapter Five: The significance of relational dynamics between mentor and mentee, and the notion of 'role modelling' in relation to identity and the desistance process for women in the criminal justice system.

3. Chapter Six: The perceived practical and emotional benefits of mentoring programmes, contributing to the 'what works' with women literature.

4. Chapter Seven: The challenges of mentoring, highlighting areas of the programme in need of improvement and development in order to fully benefit from the perceived positive impacts mentoring is able to produce.

3.7. Chapter summary

This chapter sought to introduce the method employed to capture an insight into mentoring experiences for women whilst incarcerated and post-release. Although there has been a growth in evidence-based understandings of peer mentoring in the criminal justice system, as with most other sectors of criminological research there is often an overreliance on statistical figures rather than qualitative, or 'meaningful', data that can give an account of first-hand understandings of mentoring for women. This study attempted to add to this dearth in research by providing empirical evidence that looks at the principles and practices of peer and community mentoring for women, the relational dynamics of a mentoring relationship, the perceived practical and emotional benefits in line with female criminogenic needs, and recommendations for future implementation based on challenges and difficulties. This chapter set out the framework for a gendered approach to the study, implementing key areas of thought from feminist criminological perspectives and outlining the reasoning behind this approach. The study was separated into two distinct research phases, looking initially at the experiences of peer mentoring in prison, and then onto mentoring provisions for women in the community. This study was interested in conceiving an understanding of how mentoring as a form of rehabilitation effort is used in both key stages of a women's journey through the criminal justice system, in an effort to suggest the significance of mentoring programmes being used both within prison and through the gate. These issues are brought out in further detail within the following findings chapters.

Chapter Four: Principles and Practices of Mentoring Women: Peer mentoring in HPM/YOI Bronzefield and community mentoring for women

> *'When I refer to mentoring, I believe that I mean teaching or tutorial support, guidance and professional development… helping the mentee through inevitable difficult patches'*
>
> - Talbot, 2000: 128

The above quote by Talbot (2000) discusses the basic perceptions of how mentoring is conducted and its targeted outcomes. Within this findings section, all four of these precepts of mentoring can be seen as occurring between the peer mentors and mentees in prison and with the mentors in the community. For peer mentors in the education area of the prison, elements of their role involved literal 'teaching and tutorial support', whilst this was touched on in a symbolic sense by mentors in the community, who felt they were 'teaching' women in a sense of helping them to resettle and rebuild their lives. All mentors discussed the different notions of 'guidance' within their role, in relation to navigating and coping with life in prison and on release. The idea of 'guiding' the mentee in the *right* direction was felt to be the overarching goal of mentoring both within prison and in the community.

The use of gender-informed programmes to target the needs of women has been gaining greater credibility as an effective way to successfully focus on and meet female-specific criminogenic needs. As discussed in Chapter Two, 2017 represents a year of note in this respect, as it has now been ten years since the publication of the Corston Report (2007). While certainly not the first piece of work arguing for services addressing the specific needs of women, rather than the 'add women and stir' approach derided by Chesney-Lind (1986: 84) some 30 years earlier - i.e. applying interventions designed with male offenders and male-focused needs in mind to a female population - it was perhaps the first government-commissioned, high-publicity review focused on these issues. However, both the five- and ten-year follow-up reviews of the implementation of

Corston's recommendations have highlighted the 'stagnation' and 'loss of momentum' within this project (cf. Women in Prison, 2012; Women in Prison, 2017). With some of the key points of the original and subsequent progress (or lack thereof) reports in mind, this chapter reflects on whether peer mentoring schemes in prison and mentoring services within the community have been able to demonstrate the ability to incorporate these guiding principles when working with women. This specific area of the research is undertaken in order to facilitate a greater insight into how peer mentoring was used in these criminal justice settings, as well as demonstrate what might be lacking from programme implementation from the perspectives of both mentors and mentees.

This chapter introduces key findings relating to these concerns, specifically interrogating: the core principles of mentoring approaches, looking specifically at the perceived 'values' and 'quality' of the intervention; the practicalities of mentoring, in terms of how both prison-based and community-based programmes are structured; exploring what 'being' a mentor, or being *mentored* means to an individual in these different settings; and exploring whether this contemporary form of intervention can meet the specific needs of female offenders.

4.1. Women's perceptions on the principles of peer and non-peer mentoring

Prior to looking at the data focusing on the outcomes that the peer mentoring programmes set to achieve, it is necessary to establish how mentoring was structured and organised within HMP /YOI Bronzefield. The role of peer mentors in prison continues to become established as an effective contemporary rehabilitation intervention. A core condition of peer mentoring is the perception of peers being able to provide a more empathetic and consistent level of support due to their shared experiences (Devilly et al, 2005). Davidson and colleagues (2006) explain the value of peer mentors as a source of support from those who have 'faced, endured, and overcome adversity' and as such can offer support, hope, reassurance and 'mentorship' to those who are facing similar difficulties

(Davidson et al, 2006: 443). As the use of mentoring within the criminal justice system is still a relatively new concept, there is still limited understanding of exactly how the intervention can be beneficial and how it can be incorporated into rehabilitative programmes, particularly within prisons. Mentoring as a concept itself is difficult to clearly define due to its similarity with areas such as counselling and coaching (Fletcher and Batty, 2012). Tolan and colleagues (2008) are quoted in Fletcher and Batty (2012) as explaining the four 'key characteristics' that encapsulate mentoring services:

1. An interaction between two individuals over a period of time
2. The mentor in a position of greater 'experience, knowledge or power' than the mentee
3. The mentee in a position to 'imitate and benefit from knowledge, skill, ability or experience' from the mentor
4. A lack of 'role inequality' that is typically present in other 'helping situations' and is typically marked through professional qualifications, training or pre-determined status

(Tolan *et al,* 2008:180, cf. Fletcher and Batty, 2012: 2).

This explanation of the characteristics of peer mentoring suggest the way in which it can differ from traditional 'professional-client' (Tolan et al, 2008: 180) relationships that are typically found in criminal justice interventions. As the core principle of mentoring is its ability to foster positive and engaging relationships, a peer dynamic could be best placed for this form of relationship to develop due to fewer elements of hierarchy in the relationship from the outset, and the significance of being supported by someone with a shared understanding of an offender's situation. With this in mind, the chapter moves on to explore the perceived 'value' of mentoring by peers within HMP/YOI Bronzefield.

4.1.1. The specific value of peer-led mentoring

Much of the current literature pertaining to peer mentoring emphasises the importance of a mentor that is relatable, with a shared understanding of past

experiences of trauma, allowing their relationship and advice to be more meaningful than traditional therapies or staff-run interventions (Woodall *et al*, 2015). The 'quality' of the mentoring programme was therefore a central theme that emerged from the data, with both mentors and mentees specifying the importance of a mentor that has first-hand experience of the same destructive behaviours or past problems that have facilitated in their offending. In relation to the desistance process for women in particular, a peer mentor could be distinguished from other forms of support programmes due to the 'nature of their knowledge' and their ability to help facilitate these changes through the mentoring programme (Garcia-Hallett, 2015: 23). The concept of 'guiding' women was also an interesting aspect of the peer mentoring process. This was also touched on by the community mentors, and could be regarded as a key underlying principle of the mentoring approach: to 'guide' the mentee back to the community, as well as encouraging agency in making positive decisions and behavioural changes.

In the drug recovery wing especially, the concept of having a mentor who had *"been there",* was crucial to the success of the role. Peer mentor Irene stated that with peer mentors "*we don't just empathise, we understand, we've been there".* The ability to share personal experiences and advice, having achieved their goals of sobriety, was seen as the most significant element of the mentoring programme.

> *'Personally I think all the recovery peer mentors should have been on drugs themselves to do the job properly, and know what we are going through… they need to have been there and done it to understand what it's like'*
>
> - Becca, Mentee

> *'We talk about substance misuse, she tells me one or two details about her own problems'*

- Leslie, Mentee

'It's good to hear from someone who has been out the other side, you can talk about things and it makes you realise any situation can happen, that anything can happen to anyone'

- Sarah, Mentee

'She talks to me on the level, it's a whole different way of talking about it [drug use].

-Michelle, Mentee

The above interview extracts were from mentees in the recovery wing in the prison and all spoke of how mentoring was effective because peer mentors had the experiences to relay to mentees. For women detoxing from substances when entering prison, guidance and support from fellow prisoners was felt to be vital as a means to cope with avoiding drug use in prison. Peers are subsequently often viewed by fellow prisoners as more reliable sources of information because of the relatable quality of their advice (Woodall, 2007). Peer mentors also commented on the importance of them being able to relate to women in the recovery wing:

'Most of the mentors in recovery have misused [drugs], *we know what it's like, we've been there done that, I think that's why it works so well here… we're breaking down barriers, it helps girls in their journey of recovery'*

- Jenny, Peer Mentor

'If I said something to the women they listened more and I could give them better feedback because we're living in the same conditions, I knew the challenges they faced and had an understanding of that. There are so many things we can offer each other'

- Diana, Peer Mentor

> *'Women are emotional anyway, we do need that emotional support from each other, there's a barrier with the officers, it's still 'them and us'. You want to be able to confide in them as a mentor, it's someone who can relate to someone else'*

- Olivia, Peer Mentor

The above quotations highlight the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship between peer and mentee: with mentees seemingly able to benefit from the peer mentors sharing their personal experiences, and mentees being able to offload difficulties they have faced through their own recovery journey. One mentor touched on this specific idea, talking about how acting in a mentoring role had allowed her to confront issues in her own life:

> *'It can be hard, you're learning something new about yourself, but it's* [being a peer mentor] *enriched my time here, my life. I have no time to brood on things, I'm starting to face problems I never have before, I never used to do that'*

- Jenny, Peer Mentor

This idea reaffirms previous research around peer mentoring and the value of having shared experiences when relating to a mentor. As discussed previously within the literature review when looking at how women were more able to relate to peer mentors, Fletcher and Batty (2012) suggest that this first hand understanding allows for the mentors advice to feel more meaningful to mentees and reduce feelings of isolation within the prison (Fletcher and Batty, 2012). For Grace et al (2015) women in custody receiving women-only peer support within a 'like-minded community' was crucial towards their recovery, as well as the significance of the relationship developed between women and their recovery

worker, or in this instance, peer mentor (Grace et al, 2015: 22). Specifically designed programmes targeting areas of substance misuse, alongside past trauma and mental health needs, is directly in line with Covington and Bloom's (2006) 'guiding principles' for an effective gender-responsive programme within female prisons (Covington and Bloom, 2006: 4). Messina et al (2010) reiterate this idea suggesting that female offenders who are able to participate in interventions that focus on issues of addiction and recovery through 'growth-fostering relationships' will be more likely to refrain from patterns of drug misuse and further offending once released from prison (Messina et al, 2010: 1).

For the peer mentors within the drug recovery wing this concept of assisting within the recovery process is widely discussed within peer literature. Brown (1991) proposes the positive impact of this role for both peer mentor and mentee, suggesting the peer undergoes a transition process from' substance abuser to professional counsellor' through a process of 'professional socialisation' inclusive of four key stages (Brown, 1991: 161). The first stage suggests a positive identity can formulate as the peer mentor is able to develop a new understanding of oneself through the attachment to the therapeutic relationship with the mentee (Brown, 1991). The second stage proposes that peers are compelled to act in a counselling role due to their previous history as an addict, and so 'exit' their past deviant behaviour (Devilly et al, 2005: 225). They are subsequently able to align themselves with a newly developed role of 'professional ex-addict' (Brown, 1991: 171) confirming their personal ability to abstain from drug misuse and reinforce their ability to provide support to mentees. Finally, it is suggested that peers are perceived as credible to mentees and are subsequently able to capitalise on their past offending behaviour having 'been through it' (Brown, 1991: Devilly et al, 2005).

> *'When we talk to the ladies, we say 'us' and 'we', we are also addicts, we do it together, it helps them to feel more confident to talk. You need to change your mind-set to change your life in my opinion'*
>
> - Kylie, Peer Mentor

The ability of peer mentors aligning themselves with their mentees, stating that *'we are also addicts',* emphasises the 'belonging, trust and reciprocity' that is capable through a peer mentoring relationship and is essential to the developing self-esteem for women who have previously felt isolated and stigmatised by their identity as an offender or substance misuser (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2015: 10).

In terms of the 'quality' and 'value' of the mentoring relationship, the ability to help women towards a changing positive identity is highly significant. Peer mentor Kylie reiterated the importance of helping to alter the 'mind-set' of their mentees and subsequently could change the women's perceptions of themselves:

> *'It teaches them to think differently, we help them to have a new vision of themselves, to see a different view, to strongly agree to change their life, and to help change their mind- set'*
>
> - Kylie, Peer Mentor

The significance of a programme that can assist with changing self-identity is regarded as a crucial component to the desistance process. Maruna (2001) states that in order to desist from crime there is a need for individuals to 'develop a coherent, pro-social identity for themselves' (p.7). This creation of a positive self-identity can allow individuals to imagine an improved future, removed from their past offending behaviour, and are more likely to recognise meaning and a purpose to their life (McNeil *et al,* 2012).

4.1.2. Non-peer community mentors: principles, values and 'quality'

The significance of shared experiences and credibility was also touched on during interviews with the third sector community mentors. This data offered an interesting parallel to the understanding of what qualifies as a 'quality' mentor in comparison to the peer mentors understanding of this idea. Community mentors were directly questioned about what they understood to be 'good mentoring' in

order to delineate their understanding of what 'quality' mentoring would look like. This also allowed for a more in-depth look at how mentors completed their role and what qualities were seen as key in assisting to build strong mentoring relationships. Whilst the concept of a 'trusting relationship' was touched on during some of the community mentor interviews, this idea, along with the notion of 'authenticity' in the role, was not discussed as commonly as it was during the peer mentoring and mentee interviews. The majority of mentors commented on being able to 'actively listen' to their mentee, being optimistic and non-judgmental in their responses as key factors to the role. Like with the peer mentors, personal life experience was also seen as significant in relation to building the mentoring relationship, despite the distinction in backgrounds between the mentors and their mentees, and not having been directly in contact with the criminal justice system previously. Research by Garcia-Hallett (2015) makes this same comment, that despite a lack of direct experience with substance abuse or incarceration, mentors were still viewed as 'dependable' and their support was valued mainly because they had different experiences and a 'different way of thinking' (Garcia- Hallett, 2015: 12). For some mentors this idea of having someone 'on the outside', both physically in relation to a prison and in terms of experiencing first-hand some of the traumas mentees had been through, was seen as beneficial. It was interesting to note therefore that both community mentors and peer mentors drew on previous experiences as positive despite these parallels:

> *'I think it's* [beneficial] *just having someone to talk to, just talking through their situation with an external person, on the outside, who is a complete blank canvas, like you know, has not been involved at all in the situation'*
>
> - Sam, Community Mentor

> *'I don't claim to have any understanding of what she's been through. I just went in thinking what can I take from my life that I've learned and how can I share that with her, or use relationships I have or resources to help her get to the end goal that she wants'*

- Nicky, Community Mentor

These quotes suggest that, despite not being able to directly relate to the same experiences of trauma or offending as the women they mentored, the community mentors felt they were still able to effectively 'guide' their mentees behaviour in the right direction.

The concept of using 'resources' was therefore different in comparison to how peer mentors were able to assist their mentees in prison, as both sets of mentors could target different needs. Despite recognising the obvious differences in past experiences, Nicky did comment on the perceived validity of her own personal experiences despite not having faced the same issues or traumas as her mentee. Another community mentor, Sam, also pointed out the clear distinctions in lifestyle and experience, however she felt that certain problems her mentor faced were ones that she had similar experience within her life and felt this enhanced the connection she could establish with her mentee:

> *'I've had family experiences with the same kind of alcohol issues and things like that and I know you're not supposed to talk about your personal life at all really, but there were a couple of really general things I said to her – that I had had experiences like that with my own dad, and she actually really liked that, I think she actually believed that I could really relate to what she was saying'*

- Sam, Community Mentor

The idea of being able to relate to the mentee was therefore seen as paramount to the mentoring relationship for both peer mentors in prison and the community mentors. The quote above also touches on the notion of how reciprocal the mentoring relationship is able to be considering the obvious distinctions in life experience as well as the inherent power dynamics within the

relationship. This concept of reciprocity is explored in greater detail within Chapter 5.

In terms of the 'quality' of the mentoring relationship, being able to trust the mentor was seen to be as important as being able to relate to each other. Another community mentor, Mary, touched on the idea of being 'tested' by her mentee in order to establish whether she was 'trustworthy':

> *'I also get the sense sometimes that service users test their mentors early on, to see how trustworthy they are… how they* [mentors] *deal with a somewhat shocking disclosure, and if you deal with it well you 'pass'. So I definitely get a sense that that's happening when I'm mentoring, they will say something that's a little bit shocking, say about drug use, and if I cope well then the next week they'll tell me something that's like horrifying, so I think getting through that phase of testing is deliberately challenging'*
>
> - Mary, Community Mentor

Both this notion of being trustworthy or having shared experiences highlights the importance of gaining an understanding of the mentee in order to develop a significant connection. This emphasis on the importance of connection was commented on in Chapter Two by Aitken (2014) when discussing the importance of 'meaningful mentoring' and what this means. Aitken suggests this relationship to be 'meaningful' in the sense that it is dissimilar from other forms of structured rehabilitation programmes with clear conditions and processes, 'Mentoring is not a box-ticking exercise. It is human engagement of trust, encouragement, guidance and hope' (Aitken, 2014: 8). It is therefore suggested that the connection established during mentoring, through building trust or having shared experiences, could be seen to dictate the success of engaging in a mentoring programme.

> *'To have more support from the officers in training us with how to deal with problems with the students, different procedures that could help, and*

what to do if we encounter problems. Just some more intensive training, establishing that connection that is going to be important'

- Nancy, Peer Mentor

The 'quality' and 'value' of mentoring for community mentors was also understood in a very different way in comparison to peer mentors in prison. During interviews with community mentors, the significance of being paid to mentor, in contrast to undertaking it as a voluntary role, was touched upon during all interviews and was a surprisingly significant element to the programmes that all women had strong opinions about. Perhaps unsurprisingly those mentors that were employed by their organisation were adamant to state the importance of mentoring being a paid role, whilst those in a volunteering capacity were confident about the significance of doing it because they *"just want to be here"*. The 'value' of mentoring for these volunteer mentors was therefore attributed to the fact that it was not something they *had* to do, a feeling they explained was also shared by their mentees;

'I said to her [mentee] that this is my voluntary work, and she was like 'Oh! I'm really thankful', and that kind of thing, so I think it would be a different dynamic if it was actually your profession, I think you'd probably have a different perception of it and why you're doing it'

- Sam, Community Mentor

'"I've really shocked service users by saying I'm not paid, they're like, 'So you just want to be here?' and I say 'Yes, I enjoy it!' and I think that can be really powerful proof and a powerful test'

- Mary, Community Mentor

Nicky, a volunteer mentor with *Catch 22*, also agreed with this notion, suggesting mentoring to be significantly more worthwhile when taken up as a volunteer

position. Nicky was clear that mentoring should be done 'for the right reasons' and that this was what made the service "*genuine*";

> *'My first instinct is that being paid feels wrong somehow, I don't think that's the reason you should be doing this… I feel it's something you should really want to do and feel like you contribute towards, you make that time for it and you make it happen because you want to help this person to grow. Being paid makes me feel like I'm being forced to go to her maybe? I feel like it's less genuine* [to be paid to mentor].
>
> - Nicky, Community Mentor

In contrast to this, the women interviewed that were mentoring in a paid capacity emphasised the importance of this, claiming it to be the most effective, and necessary way to provide this form of service to former female prisoners. For this group of community mentors the 'quality' of the mentoring programme was therefore related to the more robust training and the amountof time paid mentors were able to put into their mentoring role;

> *'I think it's really important that we're paid, I think it's sometimes something they [*the mentees] *will pull back to… they kind of respect that it's a job…I think the fact that we're paid gives us more status. There are times we have to work on our days off, or work late, it would be too much work for a volunteer…sometimes you have to do things because you're paid to, and I think that's really important'.*
>
> - Anna, Community Mentor

For Anna, it was felt that mentees had more 'respect' for the work that she was doing with them because of it being recognised as a professional job role. It was interesting to gain the perspective of community mentor Mary, as she had previously been a volunteer but was now working as a paid mentor with *Catch 22*. Whilst Mary felt that *'ideally its voluntary',* she also commented on the ability to have a 'higher quality' of mentor if they were employed;

'I think it's really tricky, the ideal is voluntary but if that's not working and you're not recruiting high quality mentors then the relationships aren't working… and if it's voluntary you are kind of limited as to who your service is going to involve, I think it's a tricky balance'

- Mary, Community Mentor

It was interesting therefore to note the parallels in the way peer mentors and community mentors gave meaning to their role. The different way this was expressed by the community mentors also highlights the divergent way in which mentoring as a practice is seen to work within the community.

4.2. Women's perceptions on the practicalities of peer and non-peer mentoring

This section of the research findings focuses on the 'practicalities' of mentoring programmes, i.e. the specific way in which prison-based and community-based mentoring was undertaken, in order to develop an understanding of the realities of practice and whether they are removed from the aforementioned 'principles' of a mentoring approach.

Previous research exploring the impacts of mentoring programmes has specifically stated the importance of effective and thorough training, and support by operational staff, in order for mentoring programmes in prison to be conducted appropriately (Devilly, 2005; Fletcher and Batty, 2012). Within a previous evaluation of peer mentoring programmes, Fletcher and Batty (2012) state that 'effective recruitment, training and support processes are essential prerequisite for successful peer interventions' (p.16). Within this evaluation it was also stipulated that 'formal mechanisms' (p.16) of support were necessary for peer mentors in order to share any difficult experiences or distressing

information that may have arisen during the session. Sufficient training and support were also expected to be necessary elements of mentoring support in the community settings, as the majority of women who were mentoring in this capacity had no formal qualification to enhance the provision of service. Significant differences in training were also found between different organisations within the community; it could be seen that those who were *employed* as mentors rather than those *volunteering* had more sufficient training and organisational support on the whole, whilst the training amongst some volunteer mentors was distinctly more casual.

4.2.1. The presence and absence of training: the peer/non-peer disparity

Previous research studies that have examined the use of peer mentoring in prisons have commented on the diverse and wide-ranging level of quality in relation to training for the role. When researching the delivery of peer-based health initiatives in prison, South and colleagues (2015) noted this absence of a robust training programme: 'The training of peer workers varied in content, duration, frequency and intensity across interventions' (South *et al,* 2015: 1). However, a similar situation could also be seen amongst mentors in the community, as touched on previously within this chapter in relation to the degree of 'quality' of the mentoring role. Research participants in the community were questioned about their experiences of training prior to undertaking the mentoring role. As with peer mentors, experiences of mentoring training were also very diverse. Due to the nature of the position, working with women who are most often vulnerable and with a multitude of needs, it might be assumed that the training process would be one of the most crucial elements of the mentoring programme structure. However, across the different organisations the level of training undertaken by mentors was highly varied; for example one mentor described having regular, two hour sessions over a period of four months, while another stated she had nothing more than a '*two-hour chat in Starbucks*' whilst another described having regular, two-hour training sessions over a period of four months. The areas covered within the training sessions were also distinct from service to service. Mentors described having training

about how to build a relationship with their client, developing listening skills and understanding different aspects of the criminal justice system:

> *'We had two weeks of training… and that entailed safeguarding and risk assessment training and also a lot of work on questioning, non-directive questioning, goal-setting… and talking to the women about what help they thought they needed, as well as different sorts of techniques for working with women'.*
>
> - Anna, Community Mentor

> *'I received two hourly training sessions over four months, around listening skills and general idea of 'what is mentoring'… some information about the criminal justice system, safeguarding children training and domestic abuse [training]'.*
>
> - Sam, Community Mentor

The fact that some mentors only received very minimal contact training hours could be regarded as concerning considering the type of work that is done with mentees and the history of mental, physical and emotional complexities the majority of mentees would have experienced, as mentioned earlier within this chapter.

For peer mentors within Bronzefield, training for a peer mentor role appeared to be unequal and varied across all areas: the majority of women commented that they had received little formal training prior to undertaking the peer mentoring position or were given the role based on training received in other prisons previously:

> *'I've done the peer mentoring class certificate for Level 1 at Cornton Vale…when I started the peer mentoring course here, everything that they mentioned I knew already so I had to see if my certificate could still count'*

- Lisa, Peer Mentor

Peer mentors Grace and Irene stated that they had received no formal training for mentoring, but felt that their life experiences and 'initiative' were more significant to their undertaking of the role than any training they could receive:

> *'I didn't receive any training, I had lots of knowledge and background experience already'*

- Irene, Peer Mentor

> *'No, no training, I was desperate to help, I've got guidelines from the teacher* [in education] *about what to do and I've used my own initiative, we're all women in the same situation'*

- Grace, Peer Mentor

Grace's comment about being in the 'same situation' reinforces the idea that being able to relate to a mentor's own experience was seen as the most valuable aspect of the programme.

Three participants discussed how they had learned how to mentor '*on the job'* or by following advice from other peer mentors. Although they were observed to be comfortable with this when questioned about it, the inconsistency of how peer mentoring was conducted raised some concerns about the standard of training that is being provided:

> *'All I know I learnt from my colleagues for the last two years, whatever I didn't know I asked them about'*

- Caitlin, Peer Mentor

'I'd only been in the role for three weeks…I was just told that I was starting a new job role and I had to just shadow another prisoner, there was no member of staff to say this is what you're doing… there's no supervision or support with controlling the women'

- Diana, Peer Mentor

'I wasn't really trained up for mentoring, its more about getting your feet on the ground… it can be really scary, I didn't know at first how to deal with it, it can be quite harrowing'

- Jenny, Peer Mentor

The above quotes highlighted concerns not only about the quality of provision for mentees due to limited training, but also the lack of effective coping strategies in place for mentors who may struggle with the more distressing elements of the role. Mentors Jenny and Diana described limited involvement or supervision by staff and effectively adjusting to their role whilst they were mentoring. The concept of 'shadowing' another prisoner was also thought to be concerning considering it is unknown whether previous peer mentors would have been given enough robust training for the role.

Within the prison-based scheme, the absences of training and support – and the potential problems inherent within this – were evident from Jenny's description of peer mentoring as "*harrowing*" which was of great concern. The question as to whether mentoring could be traumatic for the peer mentor is considered in greater depth in Chapter 7 when focusing on the pains of peer mentoring. In order to limit mentors experiencing further trauma whilst mentoring, sufficient training and continued supervision and support from staff is regarded as essential (Devilly *et al,* 2005). Within the literature review chapter, previous research studies by Devilly et al (2005) and South et al (2014) highlighted the issues around peer mentoring programmes in prison reporting a significant

problem with inadequate training for peer mentors, leading to difficulties in recognising correct boundaries to the relationship and limiting the over-reliance by mentees on their peer mentor (Devilly *et al,* 2005; South *et al*, 2014).

Peer mentors were also asked what they felt could be improved by the peer mentoring programme at Bronzefield. One woman reiterated other comments about a lack of training, specifically stating the need for more effective guidance around dealing with difficulties that could occur during mentoring:

> *'To have more support from the officers in training us with how to deal with problems with the students, different procedures that could help, and what to do if we encounter problems. Just some more intensive training, establishing that connection that is going to be important'*
>
> - Nancy, Peer Mentor

4.2.2. Motivations and mentoring: sentence plans, supporting recovery and 'making good'

For four out of the five mentees interviewed it was apparent that their involvement with mentoring was a stipulation of their sentence plan and therefore a decision made by the courts or prison, rather than their personal choice. However for all peer mentors the role was one they had freely decided to take part in, either because they were previously mentored or because staff had suggested they were good candidates for the position. In terms of motivation for the role, some women were seen to be involved for partially altruistic reasons, but the primary motivation for becoming a mentor appeared to be the perception that more could be gained from this – in a number of ways - than from engaging with the scheme as a ment*ee.*

Mandated mentoring and supporting recovery

In terms of mentees within the study, women were recruited from the education area of the prison and House block 1, which also had its own recovery unit. These areas were selected by prison staff prior to interviews commencing, and were chosen because of the claims that a higher number of peer mentors were currently working with mentees in both of these areas, therefore yielding a greater number of interview participants.

In order to establish how the programme was organised and run, all mentees were asked how and why they had initially become involved in the peer mentoring programme. Rather than optional involvement, being involved in the mentoring scheme as a mentee appeared to have been a requirement of their sentence plan for many, with mentors being a part of the drug recovery services on offer:

> *'It's part of my sentence plan, they suggest you see recovery and speak to recovery services if the offence was surrounding drugs and alcohol'*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

> *'I came in in February and saw a recovery* [mentor] *the next day, they come to you and explain the five-day lay down… I'm in for 18 months, so long-term, over a year sentence, so it was part of my sentence-plan'*
>
> - Sarah, Mentee

Peer mentors were therefore seen as an integral part of the general recovery programme on offer within Bronzefield for women detoxing when entering prison and coping with substance misuse issues relating to their offending behaviour.

This fits with the body of literature around substance addiction and modes of recovery which indicates growing interest in the concept of one-to-one

programmes to engage offenders in substance addiction treatment, as well as improving the 'quality of the relationship' between the therapist and the 'misusing client' as a crucial method in supporting 'engagement and sustained retention in treatment' (Kirby *et al*, 2011: 4). Kirby and colleagues also state that gender differences are significant for this mode of treatment, with women regarded as responding more successfully to 'empathetic treatment' in comparison to male preferences for a more practical, problem-solving tactic (Kirby *et al*, 2011: 4).

One mentee, Sarah, had asked whether I was familiar with the 'five day lay down', explaining how in Bronzefield women are assisted to detox when entering the prison, with a mentor explaining this process at reception and then visiting within five days:

> *'I used two meds, had withdrawals, and then they* [mentors] *come to you before the five days are up, they ask you about your recovery and your goals and that kind of thing'*
>
> - Sarah, Mentee

As discussed previously within the second chapter, for female offenders rates of substance misuse and alcohol dependence can often be attributed to past experiences of violence and victimisation and mental health issues (Gelsthorpe *et al*, 2007). It is also well documented that incarceration can effectively worsen issues of dependence and exacerbate psychological health problems (Gelsthorpe *et al*, 2007), it is therefore crucial that any form of intervention programme, such as mentoring, takes into account the relevance of mental health and history of trauma when providing treatment to female offenders. The necessity of this is discussed further in Chapter Seven, in relation to peer mentors' experiences 'vicarious trauma'.

In terms of understanding other forms of help mentors provide, during the interviews peer mentors were also described by mentees as assisting with group therapies for dealing with addiction within the prison, as well as providing the

standard one-to-one mentoring sessions when necessary peer mentors were therefore regarded as providing additional support alongside other forms of recovery programmes:

> *'We get booklets to do in our cell and there's groups that look at heroin awareness, cravings and addictions, alcohol awareness, we can go through all that with the peer mentors'*
>
> - Becca, Mentee

> *'I did groups at first with* [peer mentor name] *and then we also did one-to-one sessions, it was either in a group or in my cell, which was more comfortable'*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

As discussed within the Corston Report (2007) and previous studies around female pathways into crime, drug misuse is well documented as a prevalent issue in relation to female offending (Corston, 2007; Covington, 1985; Hough, 1996; Steffensmeier and Allen, 1996). Recovery work in prison is therefore regarded as highly significant for women in terms of improving their health and accessing help for substance misuse (Grace *et al*, 2015). The women within this study were clear in their discussion of how important their peer mentor had been in aiding their recovery process. The use of mentoring programmes in prison, as they are currently understood, can often be seen as adapting certain principles of both counselling approaches and drug recovery programmes. It is therefore feasible to use peer mentors for this form of treatment for addiction and recovery. Previous research around the paradigms of substance recovery programmes for offenders can also be seen as closely related to the core principles of the process of desistance from crime, as both focus on the idea of a changing self-identity (Rumgay, 2004).

When questioned about whether having a peer mentor had been helpful, one mentee, Becca, spoke about how this period in prison was a longer sentence than

she had ever done previously having been in and out of prison her whole adult life, but how having the mentor had finally made her address her substance misuse*:*

> *'It's hard, some of the questions* [they ask] *make you face up to some things you haven't before, this is the longest sentence I've ever done, I've been in prison 27 times so I need to address it, I need to stop. I've taken drugs since I was 15, I'm now 37, when you've had drugs in your life it's hard to find something to replace them with, and I need to find something else to do'*
>
> - Becca, Mentee

Although many women were part of the peer mentoring programme due to conditions of their sentence plan, some women also discussed their interest and involvement in the programme as being based on the desire to become peer mentors themselves eventually. For a number of women interviewed, both peer mentors and mentees, the mentors were regarded as working in a position to aspire towards. This idea of peer mentors having a 'role model' status is explored in further detail in Chapter Five.

> *'It's something to work towards, it makes a person feel confident, I'd love to do a course in it… it would make me more proactive, give me something to focus on, sometimes in here, I just get bored and I just want to be naughty and act out because of it, I've got no responsibilities, If I was given a mentoring role, I could achieve something'*
>
> - Michelle, Mentee

> *'She's* [mentor] *a good role model, she's in a position people could aspire to be in… she's on enhanced, all that kind of thing, that's what I'm aiming for, she could be out of prison if she wanted to be, I want to be in that position… I want to be on that level where I can go out'*

- Leslie, Mentee

Peer mentors: 'making good'

The majority of the peer mentors interviewed worked within the recovery wing as recovery mentors, and were predominantly from House Block 4, the enhanced sector of the prison. This was as well as peer mentors from the Education area, some of whom also worked with the Integrated Offender Management Unit (IOMU) who were largely based at reception to assist with women arriving at Bronzefield. As with the mentees, during interviews peer mentors were asked about their motivations for being involved in the programme, particularly as it was not a mandatory part of their sentence plan. In relation to desistance from crime, previous literature suggests that being in the position of a peer mentor within the prison can allow for mentors to gain a greater understanding of their own past offending and provocations around criminal behaviour, it was therefore significant to understand what motivated peer mentors into undertaking the role (Devilly *et al*, 2005: Maruna, 2001). For many of the peer mentors, wanting 'to help' and being proactive were key motivators for being a peer mentor:

> *'The best thing* [in here] *is to be doing things, to be constructive and help other people.. .I wanted to keep busy, to help and be useful… It helps me to pass my time in here, I want to do it for my heart, I feel like it's my mission to be here, I want to make me happy and do something positive'*
>
> - Alice, Peer Mentor

The notion of 'helping' plays a significant role within the desistance research, relating to the idea of 'making good' as a way in which individuals attempt to move away from previous negative behaviour and assist others as a means to correct their previous mistakes (Maruna, 2001). Or, as explained by McNeill and Maruna (2007), ''giving back' to others plays a role in 'giving up' on crime' (McNeill and Maruna, 2007: 225). For certain peer mentors, there was a

'generative' element to their decision to undertake the peer mentoring role, the need to 'leave a positive legacy' through constructive encouragement and assisting women to make pro-social decisions (Maruna, 2001: 104). This was evident when questioning peer mentor Jenny about her motivations to mentor, as she talked about having to overcome her own issues with drug abuse and was enthusiastic about mentoring to prevent anyone repeating the '*same mistakes*' she had made:

> *'I don't want to see kids in here doing that sort of thing* [taking drugs], *if I can stop one person making the same mistakes as I did I will...'*
>
> - Jenny, Peer Mentor

The argument of generativity in relation to the desistance process has originated alongside previous theories around the cessation of criminal behaviour, namely the influence of maturation (Maruna, 2001: Sampson and Laub, 1993). Research by Maruna (2001) alludes to the possibility of this relationship between desistance and generativity by claiming that the 'self-narratives' of offenders who were able to refrain from crime were often 'care-orientated, other-centred' and intent on promoting the next generation (McNeill and Maruna, 2007: 232). This idea is evident amongst peer mentors who talked about finding success in mentoring by 'giving something back':

> *'I'm passionate about helping others, it does help me too, giving something back*'
>
> - Kylie, Peer Mentor

This also touches again on the perceived benefit of using past lived experiences to direct and influence the mentoring intervention.

Mentoring was also regarded as a way to 'keep busy'. It seemed from the data, then, that 'mentoring' also offered a means for peer mentors at Bronzefield to

shift the speed at which her sentence was passing: Yvonne, a peer mentor in Education, stated she was able to *'use my initiative'* when mentoring, and it was also significant for passing time in prison more quickly:

> *'It helps the day pass, I love working in the English class… I don't like to sit there and twiddle my thumbs'*
>
> - Yvonne, Peer Mentor

> *'Mentoring helps with time, definitely. It takes your mind off things, it's easier to help someone else than to help yourself'*
>
> - Emma, Peer Mentor

Peer mentoring was also recognised as providing an escape from everyday life in prison and providing women with a different focus, rather than dwelling on the problems they were experiencing personally. This was again linked to the idea of mentoring providing a positive means to 'kill time' whilst in prison:

> *'I never have days off ever, not working is more depressing, I want to do something and keep busy'*
>
> - Alice, Peer Mentor

For peer mentors, undertaking their role could be seen as a form of coping mechanism for dealing with their time in prison as well as helping them come to terms with past problems. This was evident from Alice's quote about wanting to remain distracted each day in order to remain occupied, working as a peer mentor within the Education wing would therefore allow her to 'keep busy' regularly. Allowing the women to partake in a form of activity that made them feel valued was seen as symbolically significant, Pryor (2001), stated that allowing prisoners a degree of responsibility whilst in prison 'means accepting they are not wholly bad or wholly dangerous, or wholly irresponsible' despite

being made to feel that way (P.1). Again this was regarded as a positive way to build up the women's sense of identity as positive and worthwhile. Mentoring could therefore be seen as serving as a diversion from the pains of imprisonment, building self-esteem, and helping both the mentor and mentee to manage their sentences:

> *'Anything helps if you put your mind to something, it stops you thinking about your own circumstances, and it's more rewarding for me to be doing this job'*
>
> - Lisa, Peer Mentor

The theme of feeling 'rewarded' by peer mentoring was also recurrent throughout the dataset when questioning participants about their motivation to mentor, as well as wanting to feel more 'trusted' by the prison staff. One interviewee stated:

> '*I found it enjoyable, it was rewarding if you managed to help them… being a mentor here makes you more trustworthy…'*
>
> - Olivia, Peer Mentor

Previous research by Adair (2005) suggests that offender mentors are able to gain skills to help others whilst benefiting from a sense of empowerment and purpose that was previously a consequence of offending behaviour (Adair, 2005). This level of 'empowerment' was reinforced by both the concept of being seen as more trustworthy and reliable by prison staff as well as seeing a positive difference in their work with mentees. The peer mentors within this study spoke with enthusiasm about how they also valued the role for its ability to help them increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as enhancing their communication skills and general wellbeing:

'I've always been a support worker in custody, I used to be a listener before this role. These positions have always helped me have a better understanding of how I feel, I've gained so much knowledge on each job I've done and it's widened my knowledge… I have better communication skills, before I didn't have the words'

- Irene, Peer Mentor

'It's improved my confidence a lot since I've first come in here. I know what's expected of me so I try and make it better, I use my initiative… it's helped my confidence grow, and now I know how to work as part of a team, I've stopped swearing now for 2 whole months! Cause I'm an assistant, I've got to set an example, I can't be shouting out of the window or anything like that'

- Yvonne, Peer Mentor

4.3. Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the key findings in relation to the principles from which mentoring programmes are established, and whether this perception of how mentoring occurs is the reality of practice. Tolan and colleagues (2008) explanation of peer mentoring programmes at the start of this chapter highlighted the significance of the mentor in a position of holding 'experience and knowledge' from which the mentee is able to benefit. One of the key empirical findings from this part of the study highlighted the way in which the *quality*, or worth, of mentoring was understood by both mentors and mentees. The findings suggest that this quality and *value* of peer mentoring was predominantly determined by the element of shared experiences, especially for the mentees within the recovery wing. This particular finding reinforces a growing body of research that encourages the use of peer support in substance misuse treatments, therapeutic communities and twelve-step programmes, and the way in which the peer mentoring relationship can serve as an empowering

way for individuals to work towards recovery (Tracy and Wallace, 2016). It is consequently this shared experience that is seen to make peer mentoring so worthwhile. It was determined therefore that a number of the core principles of peer mentoring that originated in drug rehabilitation interventions are adopted and adapted to be used within the criminal justice context. Despite the implementation of the peer mentoring programme as a means to help mentees in recovery and education in the prison, the value of the mentoring relationship was thought to be even more significant and impactful for the peer *mentor*, rather than the *mentee,* in relation to improving self-identity and providing them with a purposeful role in prison.

These forms of values and quality of the mentoring relationship were understood differently amongst the community mentors. Despite instead having significantly dissimilar backgrounds to mentees, their knowledge and life experience was still regarded as being a 'resource' to mentees. Greater emphasis was also placed on the nature of mentoring; volunteer mentoring was regarded as more 'valuable' and meaningful because of the degree of altruism in undertaking the role; while employed, or 'paid' mentors, felt their degree of support was of a better quality due to more comprehensive training programmes for the role.

This section of the findings also highlighted the issues of limited training and resources with regard to prison staff peer mentors and mentors in the community. Whilst the negative impact of insufficient training has been documented in previous studies, the findings relating to unequal and inadequate training amongst communities mentors are not frequently observed or measured against mentoring programmes in prison. This finding is meaningful therefore, as it highlights the need for a greater 'knowledge-share' between prison and community programmes in order to streamline mentoring services and ensure a standard level of practice across all third sector organisations, irrespective of funding or location factors.

The different levels of training, alongside conceptions of what mentoring in practice meant, was highlighted as a concern for the way in which the programmes were co-ordinated, in both the prison and the community. Within the literature relating to peer mentoring support in prisons, the concept of sufficient management and training was regarded as a critical component to ensuring the intervention was properly implemented. During the evaluation of the St Giles Trust Peer Advice Project, Boyce, Hunter and Hough (2009) stated the importance of 'supporting and supervising' peer workers, as well as managing the kind of advice being provided to prisoners in order to ensure 'quality control' of the project (Boyce et al, 2009: 10). This 'control' was established to be lacking across all forms of mentoring programmes. The specific issue of limited training and support for the mentoring roles is explored in greater detail as a key challenge of this form of intervention, within Chapter Seven of the study. The findings from this chapter therefore served to reinforce some of the previous understandings of the practice of mentoring as well as providing a unique comparison between the way mentoring is carried out in both a custodial and community setting for women specifically, effectively contributing to the limited body of literature on mentoring programmes for women at two stages of the criminal justice system.

Chapter Five: Critically Considering the External and Internal Relational Dynamics of Mentoring

> '*The development of a bond between mentor and mentee can create the underlying momentum for change'*
>
> - Pawson, (2004: I)

As the above quote by Pawson (2004) suggests, it is the mentoring relationship specifically that can ensure the programme is meaningful. This chapter introduces the discussion around the significance of relationships in relation to mentoring programmes for women in prison and the community, and what value the level of intimacy between mentor and mentee can bring to the intervention. As considered within the literature review previously, relationships for women- both in prison and on release are highly significant (Covington, 2001; Covington and Bloom, 2006; Giallombardo, 1966; Ward and Kassebaum, 1965). For women involved with the criminal justice system, negative interpersonal relationships have been widely recognised as a key contributor to women starting a criminal career or sustained criminal involvement (Bloom, Owen and Covington, 2002; Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 2004; Wright *et al,* 2013). However, it has also been noted that not all relationships for women are 'crime-promoting' (Wright *et al*, 2013: 73). Additionally it is recognised that connections and networks able to offer social support, motivation to change and build social capital can change women's perceptions, as well as opportunities for crime, and assist female offenders with successful reintegration (Collica-Cox, 2016; Reisig, Holtfreter and Morash, 2002; Wright *et al*, 2013).

In order to address the research question examining the type of relationship formed between mentor and mentee, and the perceived impact of this, thematic analysis was used to draw out key subjects relating to the mentoring relationship. Under this broader theme of relationships, sub themes were constructed relating to the different ways in which the women identified the mentoring relationship. These categories are divided up as the 'type' of

relationship or associated issues: 'role modelling' in the relationship, familial and friendship bonds, mentoring and the 'desistance process', and perceived 'boundaries' to the creation of a mentoring relationship. The understandings and concepts of this relationship are then discussed and analysed through a gendered framework in order to address how significant the relationships formed during mentoring are for women in, and out, of prison.

5.1. Understanding peer and non-peer mentoring relationship 'types' in prison and the community

When analysing how mentoring programmes are perceived to impact women in prison, and their lives post release, forming an understanding of the relationship that develops between mentor and mentee is essential. Keller (2005) comments on the fact that the development of a mentoring relationship is not often the subject of analysis, however harnessing a better understanding of the 'formation, maintenance, and conclusion' of a mentoring relationship could in turn allow for a more effective intervention (Keller, 2005: 82). The relational element of the mentoring relationship and the opportunity to create a meaningful connection is one of the most distinct aspects of this form of offender intervention and so a particular focus on this element of mentoring programmes is thought to be significant to understanding the process as a whole. With a gender-informed framework in mind, the research looked to determine whether a 'growth-fostering relationship' could be formulated during a mentoring partnership and create mutually beneficial relationships (Miller, 1976: xx). This study was also interested in determining how the fundamental mechanisms of the mentoring relationship could support the desistance process for women, with previous research indicating positive relationships to be a key catalyst in the creation of changing identity and successful reintegration back into society (Cobbina *et al*, 2012: Farrall *et al*, 2011: Maruna, 2001).

5.1.1. Role models, 'safety nets' and recovery 'buffers'

Mentees were questioned about how they understood the relationship they had with their mentor and whether they were able to categorise this relationship. For Leslie, being a part of the peer mentoring programme was a condition of her sentence plan because of her offence relating to substance misuse. Throughout the interview, Leslie referred to her peer mentor as a 'role model' and was enthusiastic about describing the positive impact of their sessions. When asked specifically how she would describe their relationship, it was the form of support her peer mentor represented that Leslie regarded as so vital:

> '*She's a role model, a positive person to have in my life, really supportive. Her support has been like having a safety net. If I feel like I'm going backwards, because all I've got is time in here, if I'm debating using, I've got someone to approach and ask about it and there's not that many people you can turn to in prison that wont say the wrong things to you'*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

Peer mentors were regarded as being influential in helping mentees in the recovery unit to avoid destructive behaviours and negative situations. Leslie emphasised the importance of the peer mentor in preventing her from *'going backwards'* in her recovery process. The description of the mentor as a '*safety net'* was a powerful one and successfully depicts the concept of a mentor being there to support and effectively catch the mentee should they begin to struggle. This term is similar to that of Wright *et al's* (2012) description of these forms of relationships as 'buffers' against criminal behaviour (Wright *et al*, 2012: 75). This also reiterates previous claims that prison programmes, such as mentoring-focused ones, can be a way in which female offenders are exposed to positive support that can influence behavioural changes for the better and impact on their reintegration post release, with prison-programmes seen to 'assist in this process [whereby] new relationships are created to promote, support, and encourage gradual change' (Collica-Cox, 2016: 4). This form of relationship is also significant as a way of limiting the degree of disconnection and isolation that

women can experience, particularly within a prison setting, and can be linked to drug use as a form of coping mechanism (Covington, 1998). Leslie's description of her mentor as someone who *'wont say the wrong things to you'* also highlights the level of conviction and belief mentees had for mentors in their ability to provide reliable and trustworthy guidance. The significance of this form of relationship was emphasised in Halsey and colleagues (2016) article that looked at preventing setbacks, or a 'derailment' to the desistance process, stating the importance of consistent and positive engagements that can offer support and encouragement (Halsey et al, 2016: 1). The literature around drug recovery is also relevant to this study through its discussion of social capital in association with recovery. Granfield and Cloud (1999) originally coined the phrase 'recovery capital', linking these two concepts and suggesting there to be a direct correlation between creating new positive relationships and avoiding triggers for relapse (Granfield and Cloud, 1999). This same principle can be applied to the peer mentoring relationship, with women in prison suggesting mentors to be crucial in avoiding a lapse or slip in relation to drug use.

Leslie was also questioned further about the dynamics of the relationship, when asked whether she felt it was important for the mentor and mentee to have a 'close' relationship, she agreed that it was and it was that close bond that helped her stay on 'track' and emphasised the significance of having someone there:

> *'It is important; it enhances your ability to stay on a positive track. Not having someone to talk to makes it more likely for you to go backwards'*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

Leslie referred to the idea of avoiding 'going backwards' throughout the interview, reinforcing the suggestion that a mentoring relationship can facilitate positive behavioural changes and a movement away from a 'past' offending self. This concept has been referred to in previous research by Garcia-Hallett (2015) who stated that mentors were able to 'protect mentees from negative influences' as well as 'guide them through constructive changes' (Garcia-Hallett, 2015: 15).

The role of the peer mentor could also be likened to that of a 'sponsor' as seen in drug recovery programmes. For Read (1996) the role of the sponsor is a crucial element of the recovery journey; 'sponsorship cuts to the very core of the recovery process: two people with the same problem talking to one another about how to save their lives' (Read, 1996: 118). This idea suggests that sponsorship, as with a mentor, could be a mutually beneficial relationship that can positively impact on the recovery process for both individuals. White (2006) states that this growth in peer-based support is becoming increasingly popular as a means to 'bridge the chasm' that exists between modes of professional treatment and the means required for 'sustained recovery' (White, 2006: 1).

One of the central aims of this study was a focus on what significance the mentoring relationship could have in the desistance process for women. Emphasis was placed on the role of the relationship in particular due to the perceived influence of social relationships and positive connections for women in the criminal justice system (Collica-Cox, 2016; Giordano *et al,* 2002). Although the research around desistance from crime for women specifically is still limited in relation to male offender counterparts, it is widely understood that the concept of desisting from crime is a process rather than a single event (Gelsthorpe *et al*, 2007; Maruna, 2001). Understanding the role the mentoring relationship has in this process is therefore a central part of the aims and objectives of this study.

As well as likening the relationship to familial roles or friendships, both peer mentors and mentees frequently discussed the notion of peer mentors being in a 'role model' position within the prison. As mentioned within the literature review chapter, Bouffand and Bergseth (2008) suggest that this concept of role modelling through relationships is what marks out mentoring as distinct from other forms of rehabilitative programmes for offenders (Bouffand and Bergseth, 2008). The concept of 'role modelling' was mentioned by community mentors when being questioned about the mentoring partnership, and how they would describe their role in the mentees life. One mentor in particular felt that being older than her mentee and her job as a teacher allowed her to be a role model

figure for her mentee, particularly as the mentee had aspirations to further her education and enrol in university:

> *'There was a bit of role model stuff going on, and I was someone to kind of say, 'you can do it, there are no barriers'... She knew she wanted a mentor who was older and had got some experience'*
>
> - Maria, Community Mentor

The notion of age, and consequently experience, was also how community mentors conceptualised their role in the mentees life. Community mentor Mary was the youngest mentor interviewed, and touched on her age as being the reason she didn't feel her position was in line with 'traditional role modelling' or that she was able to offer the same 'life experience' and advice that older mentors may be inclined to. However, Mary did touch on the idea that modelling, as a theory, could be useful when thinking about the relationship:

> *'I think role modelling is a useful concept though in terms of modelling pro social thinking styles and modelling more positive problem solving and things like that... I know there are other mentors where it certainly seems like they've got a really clear role-modelling relationship: one of my colleagues is 50, he has a criminal background himself, and perhaps that's a more useful, traditional role model, so* [I am] *kind of modelling desistance and rehabilitation'*
>
> - Mary, Community Mentor

The mentor suggests they are therefore able to provide a positive example of how to face difficulties in their lives and develop different strategies devoid of criminal activity, by 'modelling' pro-social behaviours. Sally agreed with this idea, suggesting that mentoring could also be constructive in helping women to understand 'normal' familial or social relationships:

'A lot of these women have never experienced that kind of care that we would recognise as an appropriate relational dynamic, so a lot of that is even just modelling what a mentoring or friendship relationship is like'

- Sally, Community Mentor

'The long-term, really fantastic thing we're doing for them is remodelling what a calm, reliable relationship is, lots of them have never had that before, they've not had someone reliable in their lives'

- Anna, Community Mentor

Anna reiterated this point, suggesting the mentor provided a stable relationship that the women may not have previously experienced and the impact this could have for them 'long-term'. Mentoring offenders as a form of role modelling for pro-social behaviour could also be likened to social learning theories. Research by Astray-Caneda and colleagues has examined traditional concepts of social learning theory in relation to the reduction on recidivism levels in the USA following release from prison (2011). Within this context, social learning theory dictates that ex-offenders are able to observe behaviour and outcomes of behaviours and adapt their own behaviour accordingly (Astray-Caneda *et al*, 2011). If examining the process of mentoring through the lens of social learning theory it could therefore be argued that the use of positive role models, both within the prison in the form of peers and upon release in the community, could assist with feelings of self-efficacy and subsequently encourage positive behavioural changes (Astray-Caneda *et al,* 2011: Bandura, 1991).

Buck (2016) also states that peer mentors can be positioned as role models due to a 'constructed point of connection', in that previous experiences or similar past histories makes the mentor appear more 'credible' in terms of advice and support and subsequently someone whose positive behaviour can be emulated (Buck, 2016: 4). Mentees stated that being a peer mentor was a role to 'aspire' towards and that peer mentors were portrayed as a 'model' prisoner due to the

idea that they had achieved something - be it sobriety or heightened status and respect, because of their position:

> *'We've built up a good rapport, we plan to keep in touch outside of the prison as well, she's a good role model, she's in a position people could aspire to be in'*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

Looking at mentoring in relation to the desistance process, it would suggest that rather than an inherent desire to alter their behaviour, mentees require a 'model' in order to 'direct their desire' to desist (Buck, 2016: 4). For the women in the recovery area of the prison, a peer mentor who could offer guidance and direction based on their own journey of recovery was seen as particularly significant. Giordano *et al* (2002) suggest positive behavioural changes are a consequence of a cognitive transformation, occurring when individuals are able to visualise a conventional 'replacement self'' that can supplant the marginal one that must be left behind' (Giordano *et al,* 2002: 999).

> *'It's boosted my confidence a lot, and helped me not to think about the worst in myself, you're sort of looked up to… you're in a role model position'*
>
> - Yvonne, Peer Mentor

> *'Mentors have to act in certain ways, if you're loud and aggressive you're going to come across as unapproachable, you have to be a role model yourself, you have to comply with the system. It keeps your own behaviour in check, working in a team you're passionate about, if you're looking to take positive steps in the outside world, you have to change your thinking and behaviour, if you can do it in here you can do it out there'*
>
> - Irene, Peer Mentor

Peer mentor Irene's comment about needing to '*comply with the system'* further confirms the idea that peer mentors were seen as 'model prisoners' as she describes managing and changing her behaviour because of the level of responsibility she felt she had within her role. Irene's discussion of changing behaviour inside the prison in order to change outside in the community was also significant, suggesting once again that mentoring, for both the mentor and mentee, could be seen as facilitating the desistance process and a movement away from previous deviant behaviours. Mentors were therefore seen to value their positions as peer mentors, and the role model status that came with it, which would also encourage them to perform the role successfully and in turn alter their behaviour for the better. These quotes also effectively reaffirm Devilly and colleague's (2005) notion that offenders are able to act as 'agents of change' when put in a position they believe to be worthwhile, this is a critical component of desistance theory which highlights that the creation of positive identities can be a key catalyst to the desistance process (Devilly *et al*, 2005: 220: Giordano *et al,* 2002: Maruna, 2001). Peer mentor Irene's comment about changing her '*thinking and behaviour*' is directly in line with this concept, whereby prisoners are more inclined to change their own beliefs and perceptions of criminal behaviour when in this form of role model position (Devilly *et al,* 2005).

The way in which mentors viewed their identity within the prison was also brought out when describing the relationship they had with their mentees. In relation to the desistance literature, this concept of a shifting identity was drawn out further when analysing how mentees described their understanding of the peer mentor identity. During the interviews one mentor described how their position meant they were viewed as *'not quite prisoners'* because of their status as peer mentor:

> *'We're kind of seen as role models, we're in between being an education peer mentor and a teacher, so we're not quite prisoners…'*
>
> - Yvonne, Peer Mentor

The above quote illustrates the concept of a shifting identity amongst these peer mentors. Upholding this role seemed to suggest that for some mentors they did not hold an equal status to other women in the prison, Yvonne describes how she feels more in line with the role of a teacher due to her peer mentoring role. Whilst this is also indicative of elements of desistance theory due to the concept of the offender identifying as a more pro-social character, it could also be argued as problematic due to the environment in which this change was occurring. The concept of the peer mentor locating a space in-between the role of a prisoner and a member of staff could be potentially problematic in terms of recognising how much control they have within their role and questioning whether the same set of incarceration rules applies to all prisoners. The desistance process could therefore only naturally continue so far within the confines of a prison setting.

5.1.2. Mentors as friends and 'fictive kin'

With regard to the 'type' of mentoring relationship formed, it was seen to be multifaceted and described positively by the majority of mentees when questioned about the nature of the relationship. When collating relevant literature around female relationships in prison prior to conducting the research, the majority of studies suggested that, along with intimate relationships, familial style connections were the most common relationship formed between women in prison (Owen, 1998). Previous studies have suggested that women in prison 'form 'affectional' ties that have some similarity to familial relationships' as a form of coping mechanism whilst in prison (Pollock, 1998: 38). Giallombardo's (1966) widely recognised study of a women's prison dictates that women form 'kinship networks' (Greer, 2002) in order to receive emotional support and to ease themself into prisoner lifestyles and behaviours (Giallombardo, 1966; Greer, 2002). These 'pseudo-family' kinship connections were thought to be formed through a desire to establish 'lost familial roles' that women typically fulfilled prior to entering prison (Greer, 2000: 225). However, within more contemporary studies the extent to which this form of relationship develops between women has been questioned (Greer, 2000; Pollock, 1998). This

conception of how women in prison create connections is arguably an archaic, stereotypical idea developed from gendered expectations of male and female behaviour in society. It has been suggested in previous literature that women are socialised to place value on relationships and friendships in comparison to men and will subsequently form these types of closer, intimate bonds more naturally (Forsyth and Evans, 2003; Pollock, 2002).

Following on from the previous discussion in this chapter around the mentees understanding of the relationship in role model terms, this study was also interested in determining whether peer mentors would also describe their mentor-mentee relationship in a familial sense. With reference to the desistance framework, this study was therefore focused on examining the degree of 'strong bonds' that were able to develop between mentors and mentees during a prison-based programme; Collica-Cox (2016) reaffirms the significance of this stating that 'the bond of attachment becomes a fundamental component in sustaining the desistance process' (Collica-Cox, 2016: 1). With this in mind, the research interviews sought to capture whether these forms of fictive kin and pseudo family bonds were recognised.

During the interviews with mentees, the women used a variety of terms to describe how they saw their mentor, from 'role model' and 'counsellor' to 'friend':

> *'A lot of us have gone through traumatic things and the mentor is almost like a counsellor for people to speak to, you can build a positive relationship'*
>
> - Michelle, Mentee

> *'She's a nice person: we have a chat, a few laughs, a gossip. It's like she's my friend as well'*
>
> - Becca, Mentee

Peer mentors were regarded in both a casual, friend-like manner, as described by mentee Becca, and the more formal role of 'counsellor', which suggested the different ways in which the mentors conducted their mentoring sessions. The above quotes also serve to reaffirm the concept that mentors can offer mentees a 'positively growing relationship', which is regarded as highly significant for women in relation to the desistance process (Garcia-Hallett, 2015: 3).

Sentence length and subsequently the time spent with mentors also influenced how the mentees described their relationship, with women on shorter sentences stating there was less time for a meaningful relationship to develop or for mentoring to have a significant impact:

> *'If you're on a shorter sentence then it's more like a friendship, on a longer one you get more one-to-ones and you get to know them better'*
>
> - Sarah, Mentee

> *'I've been to prison 27 times, short sentences all the time. I don't get a chance for proper help usually, with a long sentence I can work out the problems with drugs, the problems with my offending, everything I've done is linked to drugs, but they just expect me to get on with it when I leave'.*
>
> - Hannah, Mentee

The underlying principles of mentoring for rehabilitation suggest it to be distinct from other interventions due to the ability for a significant connection to be made that can foster a trusting and supportive relationship. The above quotes would therefore suggest that for women on shorter sentences, the significance of this form of intervention could be lost on women who do not spend as long incarcerated. Changes to women being issued shorter sentences has been widely discussed in relation to the promotion of more community sentencing for female offenders as an alternative to custody (Worrall, 2003). As the majority of female offenders typically serve shorter sentences, it may be that peer mentoring

programmes in prison can only have a limited degree of impact on behavioural changes.

When peer mentors were questioned about how they perceived their relationship with the mentees, they similarly used terms such as 'friendship' and others linked to familial terminology. However, the mentors interviewed more commonly cast themselves in a maternal type of role – using terms such as 'mother' and 'grandmother' – than their mentees:

> *'A lot of them do see me as a mother, because I'm older and I have a lot of experience… and I tell them off like a mother would'*
>
> - Jenny, Peer Mentor

> *'*[Peer mentoring is like] *a friendship, I make friends easily, but I suppose I'm seen as kind of a 'granny figure' as well, which is natural because of my age'*
>
> - Grace, Peer Mentor

> *'It* [peer mentoring] *can become like a family or a friendship, some people can remind you of your mum or your aunt and the respect that she can bring, and you feel those feelings for them as well'*
>
> - Kylie, Peer Mentor

The relationships described between mentors and mentees were therefore regarded as more personal and caring than those seen in more traditional forms of offender interventions or institutional support programmes. Once again, the context of age was seen as a significant factor in the way relationships were understood between the women. Not all ages of respondents were recorded during the research interviews, however when discussing their understanding of the kind of relationship formed between mentor and mentee, often women

mentioned being 'older' than their mentee, as Jenny quoted above, or talked about their mentees ages being similar to daughters or sisters, and subsequently perceived their relationship as akin to these family connections. In general, the majority of peer mentors were aged approximately over forty years. The few peer mentors who were younger than this were usually those working as peer mentors in the classroom. In terms of the ages of the community mentors these were slightly more varied, with the youngest mentor aged 27, (Mary – *Catch 22*) and the oldest aged 51 (Anna – *Pecan, Moving On*).

A number of the peer mentors interviewed would naturally talk about their mentees using affectionate terms and in ways that describe the women as 'fictive kin'; that is family relationships that are not formed in the traditional sense, through blood ties or marriage (Garcia-Hallett, 2015: 13; Reis and Sprecher, 2009). The value of *care* within relationships, and the influence this has on the desistance process, has been emphasised previously (Knight, 2014) and is considered in an earlier study by Gosling and Buck (2015) as a 'legitimate, if not essential, mentoring tool' (Gosling and Buck, 2015: 22). In general, the peer mentors interviewed appeared to have a strong interpersonal connection, particularly the peer mentors in the recovery wing of the prison who closely mentored women around issues of drug and substance misuse. The previous quote from peer mentor Jenny that refers to her 'telling off' her mentees 'like a mother would', further indicates the maternal role adopted towards the women. Jenny discussed at length the 'tough love' approach she took with her mentees in relation to their drug recovery programmes. Throughout the interview, she referred to her mentees as 'my girls' again suggesting this idea of seeing herself as a mother figure to the women and helping to teach and look after them as a parent would. In one instance, she referred to mentoring as like being 'a parent' when describing the way mentees were supported:

> *'It's like a parent watching their children learn to walk, they're going to fall down sometimes, but you can help them get back up. I see them as "my girls"'*

- Jenny, Peer Mentor

This comment reiterates opinions discussed in established literature around peer mentoring and relationships: Meier (2006) suggests that mentoring is at its most effective when it is able to reproduce the role of a parent in the provision of 'consistent and continuous support' (Finnegan *et al,* 2010: 14). The phrase 'consistent' was used freely by a number of community mentors in particular when discussing the way in which the mentoring programme benefited the women, reinforcing the importance of the relationship being a reliable and continuous one. Despite the stipulation of peer mentoring programmes to promote relationships of equality, this concept of peer mentors being in a parental role suggested that inherent power dynamics are still evident within the relationship.

Another peer mentor, Alice, from the education wing of the prison talked about how she felt she was able to have a greater understanding of how to mentor because she was a mother herself, suggesting that a natural maternal instinct influenced how she approached her role:

> *'I feel really sorry for them, they feel lost and I understand them, they're just young girls, I have four young children at home'*
>
> - Alice, Peer Mentor

> *You bond with the people you mentor, you have a relationship… they feel like my nieces or something, I guess I feel like a motherly instinct towards the younger ones'*
>
> - Alice, Peer Mentor

This development of familial-like bonds and relationships within female peer programmes reinforces claims made in previous research by Collica (2010) and Reisig *et al*, (2002) that peer programmes in prison have the ability to help form

constructive social relationships, although it could be argued that rather than the production of 'pseudo-families' as such, mentoring could be seen as allowing women to enact a *pseudo-family role* (Collica, 2010, Reisig *et al*, 2002). As discussed within the literature review previously, women were seen to form these kinds of close bonds with each other, which subsequently had the ability to mirror traditional family roles through the support they were able to provide (Collica, 2010). This also suggests that, despite misgivings about earlier criminology theorists emphasising the re-enactment of stereotypical gender roles for women, these kinds of relationships and connections *were* brought out within the data around the way in which mentors and mentees related to one another, although arguably not to the degree expected given the extensive literature that suggests this to be the way most women form connections within a female penal setting.

The nature of the relationships formed between mentor and mentee within the non-peer led community schemes was also analysed to determine the kind of the connection formed and the subsequent impact this had on women released from prison. As discussed within the literature review chapter, previous research looking at key elements of good practice when working with female offenders highlights the need for a 'women-only' service that fosters empowerment and self-esteem and is both holistic and practical in its provisions (Gelsthorpe *et al*, 2007: 54). Gelsthorpe and colleagues also emphasise the importance of a mentor that women can turn to due to the perceived significance of personal support in addressing elements of offending behaviour (Gelsthorpe *et al,* 2007: 54). This study was therefore interested in focusing on providing an understanding of whether mentors are able to serve as a support network for women upon release from prison, as well as the role of the mentoring relationship in relation to desistance from criminal behaviour. The community mentors interviewed were either volunteers or employees from three different organisations, offering mentoring support as a form of rehabilitation intervention. This study was also interested in capturing a woman's journey from peer mentoring within prison into the community in order to conceptualise how this form of continuous support can be impactful in addressing criminogenic needs.

As with the peer mentors in prison, the nature of the mentoring relationship with women in the community was also a significant element in aiding towards the success of the programme. One community mentor, Mary, an employed mentor within the *Catch 22* organisation, discussed how she felt the relationship aspect of mentoring was what made this form of intervention so 'unique':

> *'I think the relationship is the core of mentoring, I think that's the thing that mentoring can offer that's unique. Information can come from elsewhere and I think mentoring can be about signposting as well, but the actual core relationship, being able to respond to how someone is feeling, using their language without seeming patronising, that's important'*
>
> - Mary, Community Mentor

That notion of being able to 'respond' to someone's needs and the degree of personal help mentoring is able to provide is argued as being the key to the success of the programme. Previous research reiterates this idea, suggesting that the mentoring relationship is able to provide 'companionship and partnership', as well as offering a 'positively growing relationship' (Garcia-Hallett, 2015: 3).

For the mentors in the community, talking about their understanding of their relationship with their mentees in relation to familial roles came naturally during the interviews. Multiple mentors commented on the idea of 'parenting' their mentees during their sessions, and acting in a 'mothering' role towards them, despite this idea not always sitting comfortably with them:

> *'I don't like the analogy of the mothering thing, but there was an element of that'*
>
> - Maria, Community Mentor

'You've got a deep attachment to a lot of the women… you're operating in that mentoring relationship, and some of the time in that parental type relationship… you kind of switch between being the parental bit and being the adult bit…'

-Sally, Community Mentor

Again a number of mentors aligned themselves more to the role of 'parent' than a more equal relationship dynamic. Sally also commented on 'being the adult' again suggesting that mentees were occasionally seen in a child-like role. As with the women in the prison, age was again a significant factor when it came to relating to one another, with older women naturally feeling a 'mothering' way towards younger mentees. Anna commented that for a number of the mentees they were representing the mothering figure in their life that they may not have:

'Loads of them have lost their mother, their mum is dead or something like that, so for me, and about a third of the other mentors, we are of an age to be their mums so it's something obvious'

- Anna, Community Mentor

From the way the mentors discussed their relationship with their mentees their affection and the significance of the connection they had was clear. As well as a parental figure, it appeared that younger community mentors described a 'sisterly' relationship or more of a 'friendship' with their mentee:

'I think 'friendship' is probably a good one [relationship parallel], *although 'sister's' not bad, in the way that it's friendship with a commitment element, so even if a session doesn't go well you've still got to be there next week, which I guess is similar to a sister relationship – you're not going to give up on them. They can, but you're not'*

- Mary, Community Mentor

The quote from Mary sums up the significance of having a reliable and trusting relationship, one that can incite positive changes and where the mentee understands that the mentor will not 'give up on them'. As discussed within the literature review, Covington (2002) reinforces the concept of this positive relationship dynamic that moves away from previous experiences of 'loss, neglect and abuse' (Covington, 2002: 130). The use of 'sisterly' and 'friendship' terms is also interesting in relation to elements of power dynamics between the mentor and mentee. Whilst obvious differences in elements of control and power are evident in the relationship due to the women having been in prison and the mentors role as paid employee or valued volunteer, describing the relationship in this way could be seen as an attempt to re-address some of these imbalances. The extent to which this is felt by both mentor and mentee is however unknown, and it would be likely to assume that although the relationships are described and likened to this kinship dynamic, these are perceptions of the relationship and so do not go so far as to discount the underlying re-production of power dynamics that is evident in most dyadic relationships of this nature. The concept of mentoring relationships and power is discussed in greater depth within Chapter Seven.

> *'Those are really helpful parallels because what you're doing a lot of the time is parenting, making up for a lack of parenting, or being sisterly, being a cheerleader… those are all the things parents should do, but you've got to take care with it. So I'd say there are elements of parental caretaking and sisterly behaviour'*
>
> - Sally, Community Mentor

Community mentors were therefore seen to describe themselves in a similar way as the peer mentors did, confirming the close relationship they formed with mentees, as well as playing the role of advocate and 'cheerleader', encouraging them with care and compassion likened to that of a family member. The term 'friend' was also used regularly when trying to describe the relationship,

however, much like the peer mentors, the community mentors felt uncomfortable about using this term and felt the need to explain why they had used this parallel of friendship:

> *'I mean in different circumstances we could have been friends I think, I don't know, I'm catching myself as I say it, but we got on incredibly well…'*
>
> - Maria, Community Mentor

> '[The relationship was] *maybe just a friend? I mean obviously it wasn't like a friendship, but it was more how I would talk to a friend, the dialogue between us was more like that. It wasn't a friendship obviously, because it was a mentee-mentor relationship'*
>
> - Sam, Community Mentor

> *'I think women, we tend to obviously have maternal and protective instincts, especially for other women, we want to help each other and support each other, so I think that can easily form into a friendship*
>
> - Nicky, Community Mentor

It was interesting to note that prior to the interviews it was assumed that community mentors would be more 'professional' in their approach to mentoring than the prison-based programmes, seeking to move away from relationships around kin and friendship, however this did not seem to be the case. The idea of being maternal to their mentees was regarded as a 'natural' way in which to conduct the relationship, bringing out further questions about the gendered concept of mentoring and how this form of intervention and the relationship formed is significant for women in particular. During the interviews all three of the above mentors were hesitant to describe their relationship as a friendship due to their awareness of the type of boundaries that were necessary for the relationship.

Linking once again back to the kind of dynamics that were present in the relationship, in describing the mentees as friends there is a suggestion that the exchange is an equal one; Allan (1998) suggests that friendships by nature have an inherent expectation of reciprocity and that each friend is treated 'as equal' (Allan, 1998: 693). It is thought that for the community mentors this notion of equality in the relationship was complex which could be why this parallel was uncomfortable to them. One of the perceived shortcomings of this intervention could therefore be the obstacles faced in forming a close and trusting bond that does not overreach the necessary boundaries that this form of intervention requires, both within the prison-based mentoring programmes and the community programmes. There is arguably an element of a catch-22 to the intervention; mentoring programmes are seen to be significant due to the ability to form a close relationship that fosters positive behavioural changes, however there will always be a limit as to how close, and therefore potentially how successful, the relationship can be. This idea of boundaries to the mentoring relationship is explored in greater detail further on within this chapter.

5. 2. Mentoring and desistance: belief, affirmation and supporting 'new ways of being'

Previous literature around female criminality has indicated the strengths of building strong, trusting relationships for female offenders in order to reduce recidivism, and is a key notion that has been referred to throughout this study (Brown and Ross, 2010). With regards to moving towards a non-offending, pro-social identity, women are seen as developing their identity 'in relation to others', unlike their male counterparts (Bloom and Covington, 1998: 6). Programmes that encourage mutual, empowering relationships can therefore be highly useful as a rehabilitative programme in correctional settings for women (Bloom and Covington, 1998). The idea of a shared journey and experiences could also be regarded as crucial amongst a stigmatised and isolated population and could be seen as a unique strength of the peer mentoring programme. In a

growth-fostering relationship such as those formed during peer mentoring, women are able to develop a sense of empathy and support that is empowering for everyone involved and vital to psychological welfare (Covington and Surrey, 1997). When questioned about an important aspect of the peer mentoring relationship, a large number of mentors talked about the notion of supporting their mentees by 'believing in them' and their efforts to change:

> *'For me, the most important thing for them, and for me, is to give out trust, to believe in whatever they could do'*
>
> - Emma, Peer Mentor

> *'It's an experience, you can go through so much and come out the other side, you believe in that person, it's the first time in their life that someone has believed in them and you help them to get their own self-belief back'*
>
> - Joanna, Peer Mentor

> *It teaches them to think differently, we help them to have a new vision of themselves, to see a different view. To strongly agree to change their life, to help change their mind-set'*
>
> - Kylie, Peer Mentor

The idea of peer mentoring helping women to 'think differently', have a 'new vision of themselves' and 'change their mind-set' could all be argued as key elements of the desistance process. Within her research study, Garcia-Hallett (2015) discusses similar findings, whereby mentors were able to give women encouragement about their capabilities, suggesting that positive reinforcements help to assist the mentees ability to make positive changes (Garcia-Hallett, 2015). Previous literature around desistance, for women in particular, confirms the importance of 'personal support, mutual trust and validation' by others in order to reinforce the change towards a non-offending identity (Farrall *et al*,

2011: 228). McNeill (2006) notes that offender management services therefore need to work towards being 'supporters' of the desistance process rather than 'providers of correctional treatment' (McNeill, 2006: 46). Despite a lack of consistent empirical evidence to suggest peer mentoring and desistance are definitively connected, Buck (2016) hypothesises that there are certain elements inherent to both the desistance process and peer mentoring programmes that suggest they could be (Buck, 2016). Brown and Ross (2010) have previously discussed this concept, stating that human capital is essential towards influencing the 'narrative' that offenders create around themselves, which could effectively be influenced by a peer mentoring relationship (Brown and Ross, 2010: 38). Buck (2016) theorises that peer mentoring is therefore 'desistance in practice' (Buck, 2016: 3). It could also be proposed then that mentoring is seen to be in keeping with a concept of a gender-focused, holistic approach to rehabilitation for women, through the creation of 'mutual and empowering relationships' (Bloom and Covington, 1998: 6). It could be argued that the role of the peer mentor can act as a 'hook for change' for those women who are receptive to the idea of a new pro-social identity (Giordano *et al*, 2002; Opsal, 2012). Within desistance theory, it is suggested that individuals are able to make proactive decisions when presented with these hooks for change, aiding in their cognitive transformation and providing an opportunity to claim alternate, positive identities (Giordano *et al*, 2002; Rumgay, 2004).

For women being mentored in the community on release from prison, the support a mentor could provide is significant to their readjustment back into society and is perceived to impact long-term recidivism and eventual desistance from crime. As discussed within the literature review, previous analyses of mentoring schemes have indicated positive improvements for women in areas of reduced drug use, emotional health and wellbeing and preventing offending (Sacro, 2013). Current theory on women's experiences post incarceration emphasise the importance of 'structural and psychological factors' in enabling desistance from crime (Farrall *et al*, 2011: 221). In particular pro-social identities, significant relationships and 'reciprocity and generativity' have been regarded as especially beneficial (Farrall *et al*, 2011: 221). Mentors in the

community were more able to discuss the perceived impact of mentoring programmes and relationships on their mentees efforts to desist from crime. The concept of 'championing' women towards desistance and a 'crime free life' was mentioned by numerous mentors, Sally in particular discussed how mentoring was able to 'move women on' in their lives and the powerful impact of helping them to create a positive narrative and 'new way of being':

> *''You're a kind of external depository for hope and for keeping that vision of a crime free life… to have a voice saying 'you can do this, you don't have to live like that…I think you're believing in somebodies new story and new way of being'*
>
> - Sally, Community Mentor

> '[The purpose of mentoring] *it's to try and move people on… It's present, continuous work and its not a once and for all thing, its on-going work, its deep work, and the purpose of the mentor really is to set goals and help people achieve them'*
>
> - Sally, Community Mentor

5.3. Boundaries to the mentoring relationship

The type of relationship formed, and the creation of a pro-social connection, was deemed to be one of the most significant elements of a mentoring intervention. Due to this idea, during the interviews this study sought to reflect on what may have been a boundary to the relationship and influenced the degree to which the mentoring relationship was impactful. Spencer (2007) in his study of mentoring relationship failures with adolescents, cited six key areas that are seen to contribute towards 'the demise of the mentoring relationship'; the mentor or mentee abandoning the programme, a lack of mentee motivation, unfulfilled expectations, difficulties in mentor relational skills, family interference and finally inadequate agency support (Spencer, 2007: 331). Of these issues stated,

insufficient staff support and difficulties with relational skills were the most prevalent problems seen between mentors and mentees. Chapter seven explores these challenges in greater detail, whilst the final section of this chapter focuses on understanding what can interfere with the development of a mentor mentee relationship and the subsequent effect this can have.

The research interviews explored how 'close' the mentoring relationship was and whether forming a close relationship was important. Previous research indicates that the formation of a trusting and reliable connection is highly significant in regards to influencing positive behavioural changes for women with a history of criminal behaviour (Bloom *et al*, 2002: Weaver, 2013). Brown and Ross (2010) stipulate that mentoring could be a means to construct this close relationship because of the degree of contact that takes place between mentor and mentee. It is this idea of more consistent contact that marks out mentoring as unique in comparison to similar rehabilitation interventions. Despite previous literature specifying the significance of this close connection in the mentoring relationship, peer mentors were clear during the interviews about not wanting to be '*too close'* to their mentee as this was regarded as detrimental. Reasons for ensuring the relationship was not too intimate included women being anxious they would be asked to do something they were *'not comfortable with'* by their mentee or that women would become over-reliant on their support:

> *'You're close but not too close, familiarity breeds contempt. If you're too close they might ask you to do something you're not comfortable with'*
>
> - Olivia, Peer Mentor

> *'A close relationship is important, but you don't want to be too close. I don't want them to rely on me totally. It's good to have other people support them as well so you don't get let down and then they can use their own initiative as well'*

- Grace, Peer Mentor

Mentors were also concerned that if they were '*too friendly*' towards their mentees they would have less *'respect'* for them as mentors and that this level of respect was crucial to ensure mentees listened to their advice. It was interesting to observe that the peer mentors seemed to feel a degree of distance in the relationship was necessary:

> *'If you're too familiar, or too friendly, sometimes they can lose respect for you, they think we're too much like one of them to listen… I've had women say to me before: 'why should I listen to you, you're just a prisoner''*

- Nancy, Peer Mentor

Peer mentor Nancy's comment about women perceiving them to be 'like one of them' again touches on the degree of dispute there appeared to be between how mentors viewed their position and how fellow prisoners perceived it. As discussed previously, peer mentors were seen to covet the heightened degree of power and authority they felt was justified when in a peer mentor role. This was therefore also seen as detrimental in creating a trusting relationship, as fellow prisoners may have been resentful at having another form of authority figure in their fellow inmates.

Peer mentor Olivia discussed the difficulty she found in trying to manage the relationship to ensure it was supportive and trusting without being too intimate:

> *'Boundaries come into play, you have to have the right balance… its hard enough for me to be in here, if I feel like I can help you I'll do it, if you become too familiar or friendly, they can get annoyed with you more easily. I'm not your friend, we're just in the same boat'*

- Olivia, Peer Mentor

Olivia's comment that about not being a mentee's friend was interesting considering how the peer mentoring relationship had been described by other participants during the interview. Olivia's comments suggest she felt she had a designated role to play within the prison and it involved being slightly removed from the women she was assisting.

Being concerned with feeling 'let down' was another aspect touched on by a few of the peer mentors, as well as the apprehension about becoming too friendly with a mentee who is serving a shorter sentence:

> *'I wouldn't say it's a close relationship, it's more of a friendship, it's not too close, everyone here is always shipped out so you don't want to be too close. I would describe it* [the peer mentoring relationship] *as a friendship, but it has to contain certain boundaries that you don't want to cross. I don't like it if it's getting into more personal territory'*
>
> - Paula, Peer Mentor

Peer mentor Jenny suggested that, despite implying her mentees were 'her girls', when asked directly to describe the relationship during the interview, she preferred to refer to it as being a '*professional friend'* to the women:

> *'The relationship is fluid, you're trying to be a friend and a professional, you're still in prison, so it's like being a professional friend to them'*
>
> - Jenny, Peer Mentor

> *'Boundaries are always set, you make sure they understand certain boundaries, we're here to support you but nothing more than that… your ethics have got to be on point and your boundaries laid out, some women may take that a different way, but you cut that off then and there, don't let anything cross over that boundary'*

- Irene, Peer Mentor

This suggested that despite peer mentors wanting to 'be there' for their mentees, being alert to the concept of boundaries and maintaining a level of professionalism to the relationship was also a key factor when attempting to build a connection with the women they worked with. Jenny stating '*you're still in prison'* implies this setting influences what kind of relationship can be formed or how close you are able to be with your mentee.

For one peer mentor spoken to, the relationship element of mentoring was not something that was a significant factor for her. Diana stated that most of the time a relationship was not developed between mentor and mentee due to the regime of living in a prison, the limitations on access to one another and the differences in sentencing length. Diana stated that if a relationship was developed it was not 'adequate' enough:

> *'You don't really build a relationship or you do have a relationship but not one that is sufficient or adequate to meet their needs'*

- Diana, Peer Mentor

Diana went on to state that communication barriers and restrictions on contacting mentees meant it was difficult to follow up with women after speaking to them. This raised concerns that the current model of peer mentoring within Bronzefield did not successfully meet the needs of the women it was intended for:

> *'One lady is dealing with issues, I sat and talked about stuff with her, but there's no way for me to check on her, she can only phone a listener but I need to know if she's okay'*

- Diana, Peer Mentor

The response from participants regarding the level of intimacy of the mentoring relationship would imply that the ability to achieve a close, reciprocal relationship is not as straightforward as previous research would suggest. This also calls into question whether the fundamental concept of peer mentoring as a successful penal rehabilitation programme, due largely to its ability to provide close trusting relationships, is credible because of the limitations and constraints of a custodial environment.

When posing similar questions to the community mentors about possible barriers to the relationship, parallel issues to those discussed by the peer mentors were brought out during the interviews. Boundaries were commonly discussed, much like the peer mentors, with all community mentors interviewed emphasising the need to keep things 'professional' and limit feelings of over-reliance or co-dependence by their mentees:

> '*It's just having somebody there I think, but there were also boundaries that she knew it was just certain days and I wasn't always on the other end of the phone obviously*'
>
> - Sam, Community Mentor

> *'I think it was more just having someone to talk to, not on a friendship level, I think you have to be very firm, firm but open, it's a very delicate…a delicate approach, you have to be firm that this is a professional relationship but at the same time I'm here to support you*'
>
> - Nicky, Community Mentor

Although the enforcement of boundaries to the relationship was expected, this concept of maintaining a 'professional' relationship conflicts with previous literature stating the importance and significance of forming an organic

mentoring relationship (Clayton, 2009). This data instead reinforces claims by Finnegan and colleagues (2010) that a mentoring relationship, specifically peer mentoring, requires more obvious, distinct boundaries than ones that exist in other normative relationships (Finnegan *et al*, 2010). Whilst both community mentors and peer mentors were vocal about how to limit the intimacy of the relationship, it does contradict earlier discussions around the mentoring role being understood in terms of family dynamics. This would suggest that despite an understanding that the relationship should remain formal, natural instincts of care and compassion are difficult to eliminate entirely. One community mentor, Sally, expresses the difficulty she had in having to explain to her mentee that their relationship could not be a traditional friendship:

> *'She said, 'I really wish you were my friend', and I said 'I know, but I'm your mentor and that's different isn't it?'... You've got to be so alert to boundaries, you've got to be on it, because I wish she was my friend too but that's not the situation, I work with her, it would be inappropriate if she became my friend...I just very gently said, 'I know, but I'm not, I'm your mentor''.*
>
> - Sally, Community Mentor

Whilst previous literature praises the *type* of relationship formed to be the unique and significant element of mentoring within a criminal justice context, the above quotes would indicate that there is a degree of difficulty for the relationship to ever be a completely natural and intimate connection because of how it initially develops and the obvious power distinctions inherently present. Another element that may cause difficulty to the relationship is the notion that it is temporary and will obviously come to an end, again making it distinct from a naturally developed relationship:

> *'There's a danger of it* [the mentoring relationship] *being an inappropriate, independent relationship. It is quite good to keep that in focus: that this is a professional, work relationship, and it's highly important. And that I'm not*

going to finish with you anytime soon necessarily, its just that there will be an end'

- Sally, Community Mentor

'My situation has very clear boundaries. We care about each other on a certain level but actually one thing that they told us in training, not to say that in every meeting but make it clear that this is a temporary relationship…so I'm here to support you towards independence'

- Nicky, Community Mentor

'Boundaries are very important, you're not taking calls outside of work hours… I'm going to do what I can to make the very best of my ability, but the end result won't be up to me… I mean it sounds quite heartless, I mean I'm very fond of them all, I mean I would be gutted, I would be incredibly sad if anyone died, but whether you go back to prison or not, or whether you have set backs…they have free will, I'm not there to fix them, I'm there to advise them'

- Mary, Community Mentor

In terms of reciprocity of the relationship, one mentor had the distinct difficulty of knowing the family of the mentee she had been matched with. This was an unusual scenario and one that was managed carefully by both Sam, the mentor, and the supervisor of the mentoring programme. Sam felt as though the connection they had outside of the programme was in some ways positive as her mentee felt 'familiar' with her and therefore opened up more easily to her. However, Sam discussed feeling as though the familiarity she had with her mentee was '*crossing the boundaries*' and she had difficulty understanding how the relationship should be managed:

'I think she felt quite familiar with me, and she started talking about other things and not just you know, her court case and that... she started talking about the family members I knew and that kind of thing, which I did feel a bit like, 'is this crossing the boundaries?' because I don't want her to start thinking of me as anything else than a mentor or I didn't want her to think we could meet up socially and that kind of thing'

- Sam, Community Mentor

This would again suggest the constructed quality of the mentoring relationship as it was difficult for it to naturally develop any further. There is also a distinct power difference within the relationship whereby ultimately the mentor is able to control how the relationship is expressed, as well as the inherent inequality that may already be present between mentor and mentee because of preconceived ideas about age or involvement in offending behaviour.

5.4. Chapter summary

This chapter focused on exploring the significance of relationships between mentor and mentee and whether the principles of mentoring interventions could be seen as relevant to the desistance process for female offenders. For women, supportive social networks and a degree of social capital are seen as crucial towards their ability for successful rehabilitation and reintegration back into society (Reisig *et al,* 2002), the research therefore sought to explore whether strong bonds could be formed during mentoring. The findings indicate that for mentees, a peer mentor provided a 'role model' figure whose behaviour could be emulated, allowing for women to change their perception of criminal behaviour and move on from an offending identity. Mentors in the prison were regarded as 'safety nets' that could guide women away from substance abuse or risk-taking behaviour. Relationships with community mentors on release were regarded in much the same way, providing the women with the kind of reliable, trusting relationship they may not have experienced previously. In this way, mentors were seen as 'the foundation for change to occur' and were able to provide the

support and empowerment to make these positive changes (Salgado *et al*, 2011: 291).

For the women in the role of peer mentor, their position involved helping women not to make the same mistakes that they had previously and to divert them away from destructive behaviours whilst incarcerated. Maruna (2001) discusses the ability for the desistance process to be maintained when the offender is able to give back and support others in order to re-affirm their own pro-social behaviour. Maruna terms this process 'making good', whereby the offender is able to support positive changes whilst making sense of their own previous negative behaviours (Maruna, 2001; 104). Following the outcomes of the research, it was seen that peer mentors can be regarded as the 'professional ex', utilising their past criminal identity in order to support positive changes for other individuals (Collica-Cox, 2016: 5). Therefore, there is scope for the argument that the basic principles of mentoring programmes are parallel to those present in desistance theories. The data gathered from this study demonstrates that peer mentors were most frequently categorised as 'role models' when asked to describe the relationship, offering a significant contribution to the limited understanding of how mentoring can positively impact the behaviour of not only mentees but the peer mentors who take on the role model figure through their status as mentor.

One of the original features of this study was the specific focus on the relational developments between mentor and mentee. Whilst mentoring relationships alone are not an entirely unique focus, relating this relationship to the concept of familial roles between women in prison is. As previous literature around women and relationships in prison had predominantly discussed the duplication of family roles whilst incarcerated, the research was interested to determine whether these familial bonds were present during interactions between mentor and mentee. While the women were seen as relating to one another in this way, referring to each other as 'sister', 'aunt' or 'mother', it could be argued that this predominantly evidenced an element of care within mentoring rather than an attempt to re-enact familial roles. Despite the significance often placed on

women relating to one another in prison through a family dynamic, this study indicated that this could be an out-dated way of understanding these relationships. This can also be argued as another way in which mentoring is unique as a form of offender rehabilitation in comparison to standard professional interventions, in that there is more emphasis placed on empathy and care, which arguably strengthens the *type* of connection formed and consequently the degree of positive impact of the mentoring programme.

However, despite the appearance of these forms of bonds between mentors and mentees, the issue of boundaries to the relationship was a notable limitation with regard to developing a close connection. Despite one of the most significant aspects of mentoring involving the formation of a close relationship, some of the women interviewed discussed the difficulty in establishing these relationships, due to either the constraints of a prison environment or the intent to maintain a 'professional' element to the mentor-mentee relationship. This chapter also reflects on not only the inherent boundaries that existed between the mentors and mentees, but also the limitations women intentionally placed on the mentoring relationship; peer mentors in the prison, as well as mentors in the community, commented on wanting to avoid becoming 'too close' to their mentees for fear of being taken advantage of or becoming too emotionally invested, suggesting there are certain limitations to the creation of a trusting mentoring relationship. The research data also highlights that within the prison setting the role of the peer mentor was also an action in itself that was seen to create certain boundaries, with peer mentors being seen to have an assumed level of authority over other prisoners, which subsequently caused a degree of mistrust and segregation between the women.

Despite the existence of the positive connections formed between the women, occasionally in the form of familial roles, there were significant limitations to the degree in which mentors were able to form a substantial connection with mentees and elements of the mentoring partnership, such as inherent power dynamics, that influenced how close a relationship the mentors and mentees were able to have. This research has highlighted how qualitative methods are

able to demonstrate and aid an understanding of how relationships are formed in a mentoring role, and subsequently emphasise to what degree the quality of the relationship influences the outcomes of this form of intervention. The following chapter goes on to explore in greater depth the more practical aspects of mentoring, as well as the emotional aspects that are attached the relationship.

Chapter Six: The practical and emotional benefits of mentoring: 'what works' with female offenders

> *'The success of mentoring turns minutely on the mentee's appetite for change.'*
>
> (Pawson, 2004: 4)

In terms of contemporary rehabilitation models, addressing criminogenic needs has been regarded as a primary target of criminal justice interventions (Ward and Steward, 2001). Andrews and Bonta (1998) define criminogenic needs as characteristics of offending and circumstances that, if altered, can lead to a reduction in reoffending rates. Within this study, the needs of women were identified and classed as 'practical' needs, such as support with employment, housing and education, and 'emotional' needs, which included building self-esteem and self-confidence and forms of emotional support. One of the key features of the mentoring programme is that mentors are able to have more substantial levels of contact and form 'relatively intense' relationships with their mentees, in contrast to professional interventions which are usually more irregular and brief (Brown and Ross, 2010). Having previously discussed the nature of the relationship that was perceived to develop between mentors and mentees, findings within this chapter look to present what kind of impact this relationship has had for women, both in prison and during resettlement. In reflecting on the above quote by Pawson (2004), the study looked to determine whether a mentoring relationship was influential towards a woman's desire to change in the first instance, as it is this 'appetite for change', (i.e. the desire, or want, by the individual to make a change) that the success of the desistance process rests on so precariously.

6.1. 'Emotional' support: listening, encouraging and making like 'bearable'

In order to determine more effectively the way in which mentoring impacts on female offenders, mentees were questioned about the type of support they felt they had received from mentoring. The degree of emotional, or expressive, support that peer mentors are able to offer is arguably one of the most crucial aspects of mentoring - this is what allows mentoring to be distinct from forms of prison-based intervention programmes. One of the most commonly discussed ideas was the mentor as someone to share with and open up to about 'traumatic things' women had been through:

> *'A lot of us have gone through traumatic things and the mentor is almost like a counsellor for people to speak to'*
>
> - Michelle, Mentee

Michelle felt that the mentor was there to listen to her and offer advice when she was struggling with different elements of prison life. Giving advice about substance use and abstaining from it was discussed predominantly within the drug recovery wing of the prison as mentees found that sharing their struggles with substance misuse and hearing positive recovery stories from their mentor to be highly beneficial:

> *'If I'm having a bad day it's not like I can go to the officers about it, but I could go to* [peer mentor name], *she reassures me, she tells me: 'don't let drugs or people abuse you''*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

Helping with prospective goals and offering general support and reassurance meant that mentees felt more in control over their future once released - Leslie,

for example, commented on how mentoring was positively influencing her perception of her future:

> *'It makes me have goals, it puts [*the goals*] in front of me, you think, 'you can do this, you can do that'… with the right services, I can carry it on, I have a better perspective on everything'*
>
> - Leslie, Mentee

> *'It's made me more empowered, I can make my own decisions about things'*
>
> - Sarah, Mentee

During interviews peer mentors were also asked about their perceptions of how peer mentoring could be placed to address female-specific needs. This was understood under two broader categories: the provision of *emotional* support and *practical* support. As referred to in Chapter Two of this study, earlier research relating to the benefits of mentoring proclaim the significance of this form of intervention in addressing the lesser dealt with 'non-criminogenic' needs of female offenders (Brown and Ross, 2010). In terms of providing emotional support, one peer mentor discussed how, to her, the main concept of mentoring involved ''*encouraging*'' her mentee:

> *'A lot of encouraging, encouraging others, help them to quit the negativity'*
>
> - Paula, Peer Mentor

Another peer mentor described her role as being someone the women could ''*lean on''* and trust when discussing past trauma or difficulties:

> *'Sometimes the ladies just get themselves into a knot, they need someone they can lean on, they trust us and tell us a lot more than the staff. It can be*

hard, harrowing, especially if they've never spoken about these things before'

- Jenny, Peer Mentor

'Women are emotional anyway, we do need that emotional support from each other, there's a barrier with the officers, it's still 'them and us'. You want to be able to confide in them as a mentor, it's someone who can relate to someone else'

- Natalie, Peer Mentor

The reality of these kinds of emotional needs experienced by women were brought out clearly within the data, as almost all peer mentors spoken to discussed the importance of having someone to talk to whilst in prison, who can understand the context of your situation and offer guidance and support in order to cope.

For Caitlin, however, being a peer mentor was more than being encouraging or supportive – it was an existential project, one that was designed to render a more bearable life inside:

'The aim of peer mentoring is to make being here as bearable as possible, it's comforting to have if the woman doesn't know what prison is like, it's about putting them at peace, and they can see it's not as bad for her and that helps'

- Caitlin, Peer Mentor

Other women shared Caitlin's view that peer mentors provided a vital form of reassurance and comfort, particularly for women who have recently entered the prison:

'Because I've been through it, I know the journey they go through, I've been there… we build up trust with them, they start telling you a bit more about what went wrong in their lives, we signpost them, ask them if they want to move forward with this, working with everybody, relaying information to the case workers'

- Irene, Peer Mentor

The importance of mentoring women when first coming into prison was thought to be particularly important due to the heightened levels of distress experienced at this time; previous research indicates the increased likelihood of instances of suicide and self-harm amongst prisoners during their first few nights in custody (Shaw *et al*, 2004; Liebling *et al,* 2005).

Addressing the emotional needs, or non-standard criminogenic needs, of women in criminal justice settings is another area where mentoring programmes are able to make considerable difference in comparison to other forms of rehabilitation programmes. One participant commented that she wouldn't want to *"just care for somebody's material needs and neglect the deep set stuff"* (Sally) highlighting the importance of a form of mentoring which focuses on addressing previous traumas, and supporting women *emotionally* as well as *practically*. Interviewees raised the idea that for their mentees just '*having someone there*', someone to talk to, and a stable support network was crucial at this point in their lives and something they may not have previously experienced:

'Just knowing that there's someone, I know my mentee said she looked forward to coming out and meeting someone… I think she spent a lot of time by herself so I think it was just a sounding board, having someone to listen to, she could be completely open with me, so it's just having somebody there'

- Sam, Community Mentor

'It's really having someone to talk to; a lot of the times it seems women lose that social network depending on the length of time of their sentence'

- Jessica, Community Mentor

In terms of a desistance narrative, the emotional support provided through the mentors in the community assists to provide 'narrative strategies' to positively influence the direction of the women's lives, as well as the verification of these positive changes, Sally suggested the importance of someone *"standing alongside you":*

'There's two sides to it, [mentoring] *the emotional and the practical support. These women, they need a cheerleader, they need someone who gives a monkeys, and who believes in them, and that is as important as having someone to come to housing with you and try to get you to work… because often you're working with people who are just strangers to the idea of self esteem… unless you've got someone else standing alongside you, you're going to keep repeating the same patterns of behaviour'*

- Sally, Community Mentor

6.2. 'Practical' support: education and housing

Of course, in addition to the emotional and psychological focused needs of women in the criminal justice system, it is also crucial to address those practical issues which may be cause for concern in relation to risk in future recidivism. Community mentors were best placed to support women following their release with the practical needs that go along with resettlement. Each organisation that

offered mentoring to women attempted to align itself as a more holistic, supportive service rather than a correctional facility or professional intervention. Gelsthorpe and colleagues (2007) stipulate that this removal from the probation-style of authoritative intervention assists to reinforce the idea of moving towards a non-offending identity (Gelsthorpe et al, 2007). During interviews mentors were questioned specifically on the kinds of practical support or benefits that they perceived mentoring as being able to provide to women. Anna, a community mentor with the *Pecan* programme, stated the main aim of mentoring was to prevent reoffending:

> *'The purpose of the project is to help women not reoffend, and to that end the work we do is around that... so the bigger picture is not to go back to prison, stuff happens in the interim and we have to deal with that'*
>
> - Anna, Community Mentor

When working in a practical sense with women, more than half of the community mentors interviewed discussed the concept of 'goal setting' to help structure the mentoring programme and the kind of support women received. Previous research around mentoring women on release has commented on the importance of the strategies used within mentoring and how it is practiced in relation to matching mentors to mentees and devising goals and objectives (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005). Setting goals and 'goal-planning' was an area that the majority of mentors talked about when asked how a typical mentoring session was structured. For mentor Sally, helping women to reach these goals was regarded as one of the most significant, and enjoyable, aspects of the role, and she emphasised that it was this 'connection' established whilst achieving these goals that was so significant about mentoring:

> '*Part of my purpose is to care well for the woman in front of me to enable her to set goals and achieve them, and that's why a robot can't do it you know, you can have a computer programme set goals with you, but there's something profound about human connection'*

- Sally, Community Mentor

Most mentors stated that their relationships were *"fairly goal driven*" with mentors setting up a 'goals sheet' at the start of a session with the mentee and referring back to these set goals throughout the mentoring period:

> *'She said that it had been really nice to just meet and chat every week, and I had kind of given her some new goals and ideas to reach for and how she could, sort of, be equipped with the tools to meet those goals'*

- Sam, Community Mentor

> *'[*To start with*] we have a one-to-one meeting… just going over the basics and then developing a goals plan with them, just meeting with them and figuring out what their immediate needs are to be addressed, usually it's housing… when you're released from prison the first issue is 'I need somewhere to sleep tonight''*

- Nicky, Community Mentor

This idea of signposting women towards different services was something raised by all of the community mentors interviewed: it was suggested that one of their primary roles was to assist women in the 'right direction', to help them achieve their goals rather than make decisions for them:

> *'She wanted someone who could kind of signpost and show her the way, but not do things for her, she was really clear about that, and that's my understanding of mentoring'*

- Maria, Community Mentor

'We're not 'fixers', none of us is, that is very clear, it's not a project where you make them jump through hoops, it has to be hoops they want to jump through'

- Anna, Community Mentor

The practical support offered to women from peer mentors was meaningful in understanding how interventions in prison could address the more instrumental aspects of care that women required. Peer mentors worked across different areas of the prison, with the concept of peer mentoring varying depending on where it was being delivered. Recovery mentors predominantly spoke about their attempts to encourage their mentee through the recovery process, whilst also addressing problems they had outside of prison with regards to housing or financial difficulties.

Three of the peer mentor participants worked with the Integrated Offender Management Unit (IOMU) and discussed the practical aspects of peer support, particularly for first time prisoners. The initial days in prison can be a particularly challenging period for most women, with a heightened risk of suicide and self-harm incidents occurring during this time, highlighting the significance of this early form of support (NOMS, 2015). Peer mentors recognised they could play a significant role as a key source of information and support to help adapt to the prison regime during this transition:

'Your first time in prison is rough, I help put their mind at peace, I ask questions, do anything I can to help and then they are able to sleep. I do inductions with the IOMU, I get information from them to tell the ladies how to get a job, about the job centre… we do all sorts of things, stop direct debits, facilitate calls, and I meet up with ladies with any concerns'

- Caitlin, Peer Mentor

'We do the induction process, help to explain the role of the case workers, we help facilitate phone calls to the bank and that kind of thing, we help complete pre-release paperwork…'

- Diana, Peer Mentor

Assisting women at the induction process of the prison has previously been discussed as a beneficial use of the peer mentor role. Devilly et al (2005) states that the information offered by 'like-minded peers' may serve to be more acceptable than if conveyed by prison staff (Devilly et al, 2005: 227).

Mentors working in the education wing typically acted as peer mentors in the classroom, discussed the practical benefits of their role in assisting with teaching and the importance of the provision of one-to-one support that the mentoring programme affords the women:

'You can understand a lot more when it's one-to-one, and you can explain it in a different way than you'd explain it to the whole class, you can explain things in an easier way that they understand'

- Yvonne, Peer Mentor

Abstaining from drug use and help with avoiding criminal behaviour were also touched on as areas of instrumental support that the peer mentors provided. Support focused in this area could be regarded as particularly effective due to the high levels of drug offences committed by female offenders (Covington and Bloom, 2006), as well as a common issues of poor coping mechanisms in relation to substance and alcohol misuse (Devilly et al, 2005). Devilly and colleagues (2005) suggest therefore that peers within the prison, rather than outside agencies or programmes, could be more effective at leading substance abuse programmes (Devilly et al, 2005).

'To stay off drugs, stay out of prison after. To give help with somewhere to live when I get out… something's got to change, when I go for a job and

disclose that I've been in prison all these times, employers don't want to know, it's really hard to get a job'

- Becca, Mentee

6.2.1. Education

Another significant area of practical help addressed by these community mentors was around employment and education. Radcliffe and Hunter (2015) discuss the significance of accessing education and employment opportunities is perceived as being able to 'facilitate narratives of transformation' for women to invoke a changed identity (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2015: 12). A discussion around assistance with education was brought out during an interview with a volunteer mentor who taught at a university and was assisting her mentor to get into further education:

'She is keen to come to university, that was her aspiration, but what I've done now is I've handed her on and now she's meeting with one of the Widening Participation Mentors at the university'

- Maria, Community Mentor

As well as signposting and inspiring the routes to achieving her mentees goals with education, Maria discussed her role in helping her mentee think about what education would mean for her and giving her the opportunity to walk around a university lecture hall to inspire her, an experience that was seen to be invaluable to her mentee:

'When we met the first time, I showed her around the campus and we went into the big lecture theatre downstairs, it was empty so we went in, and she cried because it was just such a big thing for her and such a part of her aspirations and her goals.'

- Maria, Community Mentor

This personal level of support can be tailored to individual needs and encompasses different ways to provide for the mentor in both a practical and emotive sense. The importance of education for women in the criminal justice system was also touched on during interviews with the peer mentors in prison. A report by Dixon and Jones (2013) on the importance of learning and skill development for women in prison comments on the importance of these types of programmes in assisting to support women's resettlement on release. The effective use of education and core learning skills in prison can aid women with employment upon release, which is recognised as a crucial element in limiting instances of reoffending (Dixon and Jones, 2013). Education is therefore seen as a key route out of criminal behaviour for women (Covington and Bloom, 2004; Worrall, 2009), highlighting a greater need for interventions, arguably such as peer mentoring, that target this particular 'pathway' whilst women are able to access such resources in prison.

6.2.2. Housing

Issues with housing and accommodation difficulties were another area of practical help that the mentors raised as being a particularly problematic area for the majority of women. The problem of housing is an especially salient one for women leaving prison and is recognised as one of the nine pathways that are key to reducing reoffending for women. Recent statistics reveal that as many as 60 per cent of women leaving custody do not have accommodation to go to once released.[7] As discussed previously within the literature review, The Corston Report (Corston, 2007) also emphasised the importance of a 'gender-specific' focus on the need for suitable accommodation for women leaving prison, stating that, 'the accommodation pathway is the most in need of speedy, fundamental, gender-specific reform and should be reviewed urgently.' (Corston, 2007: 23). The problem of women leaving prison with no safe accommodation is also an issue that is seen to be specific to women leaving the research site, HMP/YOI

[7] Women in Prison report, 2016

Bronzefield. During a recent HMP Inspectorate report (2016), it was claimed that the prison was issuing tents and sleeping bags to women on release due to a lack of social housing, which is regarded as a very troubling 'solution' to the issue and further highlights the importance of the work done by women's centres in the community. This was touched on during an interview with mentor, Nicky, who spoke about being an 'advocate' for her mentee in terms of tenancy issues, and talked about how the mentoring relationship was like 'team work':

> *'You emphasise that it's a partnership and it's teamwork… I really think it's being an advocate, for example my mentee has issues with housing, she was in an all-female hostel but it was a very dangerous situation… she said it felt like prison all over again, she was in an all-female environment with violence around her'*
>
> - Nicky, Community Mentor

Nicky continued to discuss how it felt like her 'duty' as a mentor to continue contacting the housing authority until her mentee's situation had improved. Her discussion of her mentees accommodation as *"dangerous"* and *"like prison all over again"* highlights the need not just for appropriate housing, but also to be stable and safe.

This idea of individualised advocacy mentioned by Nicky was something touched on by all the mentors spoken to and reflects previous research on the distinct advantages of mentoring, which is that idea of having that individual, one-to-one relationship and focused attention which can be the most beneficial aspect:

> *'I was almost being obnoxious about it* [contacting housing]*, you just have to be, that's what I mean by 'advocate', you know? That's the one easy thing you can do that helps them a lot, and I think that's really underestimated - the value of having an advocate for you that just has your back… they have a probation officer, they have a housing officer… but they're not focused on*

just her… they don't have one assigned person that's focused solely on them and that's what I think the real difference is'.

- Nicky, Community Mentor

Assisting with writing CVs, childcare issues and job applications were other areas of practical help that mentors discussed supporting their mentees with. Previous research around mentoring programmes has evidenced the practical benefits of mentoring in assisting with benefits claims and employment (Hunter and Kirby, 2011). This kind of provision can be seen as helping to provide women with enhanced social capital and networks of support, enabling them to create opportunities to positively contribute to society, which is subsequently a core concept of the desistance process.

It was notable that a few women commented that the majority of their help was towards preventing reoffending for women, providing them with enough support so as to not fall back into a pattern of offending behaviour. This idea relates to other findings which focus on the purpose of mentoring programmes to assist women with reintegrating back into the community and eventual desistance from crime (Easton and Matthews, 2011):

'Your ultimate goal is to not reoffend, for example, you obviously have to break that down into all the things that are going to influence that, like appropriate housing and training'

- Sally, Community Mentor

6.3. Promotion responsibility, supporting self-change

Previous literature regarding the impact of peer mentoring within a criminal justice context has predominantly focused on the impact that the mentoring

programme can have on those being mentored, or the benefits for the establishment itself. An evaluation of the St Giles Trust Peer Advice Project by Boyce, Hunter and Hough (2009) advocates the use of peer mentors as an 'important resource' that is both 'cost-effective' and able to divert professional resources elsewhere (Boyce et al, 2009: 12). Whilst this is an obvious value to the peer scheme, this study was more interested in understanding how the mentoring programme could benefit the prisoners specifically. This section of the findings observes that mentors could be argued as benefitting more widely from the peer mentor relationships, despite the mentees being the focus of the intervention. It was significant to speak to peer mentors and establish the various ways in which undertaking the role impacted on them, in both positive and negative ways. This finding is more in line with updated research, which suggests that the positive mental health outcomes for those delivering peer mentoring could outweigh the benefits of those who receive mentoring (Woodall et all, 2015).

As discussed within Chapter 4, the concept of providing a 'meaningful' role was something all peer mentors seemed to value in one form or another. Mentoring was regarded as being able to provide peer mentors with a sense of purpose and self- worth within the prison, instilling the feeling of being 'valued':

> *'I had responsibilities on the outside, so when I was given this job in here, I felt valued again, I have a sense of responsibility and authority, it helps to give me back a sense of identity'*
>
> - Natalie, Peer Mentor

Natalie closely aligned her identity within the prison to the role of peer mentor, and emphasised the way in which it helped her to feel as though she was making a contribution. Stating that she felt a 'sense of authority' also reiterates the way in which peer mentors perceived their role to be one with a level of control over other prisoners. This concept of power dynamics is explored further within Chapter Seven.

The idea of regaining a 'sense of identity' was also touched upon frequently during interviews with peer mentors. Caitlin, like Natalie, spoke about how the peer mentoring role gave her a sense of responsibility and encouraged her to set a 'standard' for herself:

> *'It's made me more responsible, I need to set an example, the women are looking up to me, I have to have a standard… not everyone is bad, we've been given a second chance and it's time for you to make better choices for your life. For me it's like being on a pedestal, you've got to stay intact and help pull others up'.*
>
> - Caitlin, Peer Mentor

Peer mentors being seen to 'set an example' was commented on by both peer mentors and mentees during the interviews. It was evident that peer mentors believed fellow prisoners would aspire to their role, commenting that "*the women are looking up to me"* and *"you're seen as more trustworthy"*", and consequently they felt obligated to alter their behaviour accordingly. As discussed previously within chapter five, this idea of altering behaviour based on the mentees, and other prisoner and staff, perceptions could be argued as being relevant to desistance theories; where changing behaviour and an effort to 'go straight' are seen as key catalysts to desist from crime and create a new, non-offending identity (Maruna, 2001: 26). The phrase "*being on a pedestal"* was also notable, again suggesting that the peer mentoring role was a desirable one, and one for prisoners to aspire towards.

> *'Being a mentor here makes you more trustworthy, they have different bands in this prison, if you're on a red band then you're seen as more trustworthy, so it allows you to have more responsibility'*
>
> - Olivia, Peer Mentor

The suggestion of being 'trustworthy' was commented on in two ways: both by mentees in terms of confidentiality in their role, "*they know we won't tell the officers everything"* (Irene, PM), and by staff who were believed to have had a similar positive perception of peer mentors, with Olivia commenting about their heightened responsibility within the prison, which could only be made possible in agreement with prison staff. This was reinforced by another peer mentor in education, Natalie:

> *'It's slightly different in the way officers treat you and how prisoners look at you,* [the staff] *they have faith in your abilities, they know they can rely on you'*
>
> - Natalie, Peer Mentor

This concept of 'self-change' was brought out throughout the interviews with peer mentors as many of the women reflected on the positive impact that peer mentoring had had for them, as well as making is easier for them to recognise and distinguish 'good' behaviour from 'negative' behaviour. Being a peer mentor was therefore felt to be 'rewarding' and it was clear that peer mentors took pride in the work they were doing with their mentees:

> *'It's a rewarding job, the fact that they want to say thank you to me… for me It's the best job in the jail, we're more hands on with the girls, we're really there for them'*
>
> - Irene, Peer Mentor

> *'If you have nothing to be proud of, your sense of self-worth is taken away from you'*
>
> - Natalie, Peer Mentor

Natalie's comment about her role as a mentor being tied to her self-worth was also particularly significant and suggested that having a role in the prison that an individual could be *"proud"* of was directly linked to greater confidence and self-esteem. This finding is in agreement with previous research around peer mentoring for women that suggests mentoring is able to emphasise skills and strengths, increase autonomy and limit feelings of isolation, all of which can aid in promoting 'positive individual change' (Buck, Corcoran and Worrall, 2015: 161).

6.4. Mentoring by women for women

As this study takes a gendered approach to understanding the development of the mentoring relationship, the significance of female-to-female mentoring was regarded as a key area of research. For the women being mentored in prison, a peer who was a female was an obvious occurrence and so this concept was not brought out in great detail. However, this was touched upon by one mentee when questioned about why she felt peer mentoring was important in prison:

> *'At the moment I feel a bit uncomfortable asking men for help, I'm iffy about asking a man to come over and help me'*
>
> - Michelle, Mentee

Due to the history of sexualised abuse and trauma a disproportionate number of female prisoners experience, this point of view was not surprising. This reiterates the need for interventions that work in a holistic framework, targeting specific needs and refraining from repeating patterns of past trauma (Covington, 2007: Covington and Bloom, 2006).

Developing an understanding about the significance of women mentoring women and gender-informed services was therefore discussed more widely with mentors in the community. The majority of participants were certain that for this form of intervention a male figure would be more of a negative figure than

positive due to issues around power dynamics and because of the past traumas their service users had faced. When asking one mentor, Maria, about whether it was important for women to be mentored by women specifically she replied that saying '*yes*' was a '*really strong gut reaction':*

> *'All the stuff to do with power dynamics and status and equalities and oppression, all of that stuff… I think it could be fraught… I mean my mentee had experienced domestic violence before and so a male mentor would have been a bit strange'*
>
> - Maria, Community Mentor

> *'I think it would be a very bad idea to have men [mentoring women]… they [the mentees] are all under 25, they're attractive, they're sexually active, it would not be a good idea to have male mentors for this age group'*
>
> - Anna, Community Mentor

It was interesting to note that when discussing issues of possible inappropriate behaviour, all community mentors discussed this issue in relation to male mentors taking advantage of female mentees. It was notable that there was only concern for the possibility of destructive, *heterosexual* relationships developing out of the unequal power dynamics found between mentor and mentee. This is in contrast to the prison-based literature and data from this study that suggests these power dynamics and elements of 'oppression' in the relationship were very realistic features of the female mentor-mentee relationship. However, despite this, no women interviewed voiced their opinion or concern about a sexual relationship developing from a mentoring relationship in the prison. It is also worth noting the significance of this in relation to a move from having fewer male staff working with women in the prison, due to concerns relating to oppression and risk of sexual violence, and towards the implementation of a more 'trauma-informed' approach (Bloom, Owen and Covington, 2002: 13).

This idea about women mentoring women also led respondents to discuss the differences between mentoring for women and men. As this was observed as being talked about regularly following the question about women-only mentors, it also became a regular question in the interview schedule. All community mentors made the observation that, whilst mentoring could also be as successful for men, it was often conducted differently and with different outcomes in mind:

> *'I think it's slightly different for men, obviously… the main thing mentoring can look at for women is around social and emotional support, whereas for men on the whole… for most of the ones that come through [*the service] *its more around motivation and organisations… it's 'How do I navigate the benefits system?'… Whereas with the women I mentored, it was much more about someone to talk to, developing relationships, giving impartial advice - it seemed a lot more social'.*
>
> - Mary, Community Mentor

It was suggested through the interviews that women would prefer the 'social' side of mentoring, that naturally women are more inclined to talk about their problems and that opening up to another woman would feel more natural. The concept of advice being more relatable if coming from another woman was also touched upon as an important factor in why female-to-female mentoring is thought to be a more successful approach:

> *'Women do tend to talk about their problems whereas men will punch someone'*
>
> - Anna, Community Mentor

> '*Women tend to naturally be maternal and want to help other people, but also other women specifically, and support them and that comes naturally, so I think it's easier to form a relationship'*

- Nicky, Community Mentor

'I do think sometimes maybe women do just get on better with women, that's one less barrier to cross, that's one less communication style not to have to adapt to'

- Mary, Community Mentor

The above statements, whilst may be accurate in describing the feelings of the mentees, are regarded as making assumptions about the 'natural' biological states of men and women that subsequently dictate their behaviour. There is a question therefore as to whether these assumptions are simply a product of gendered patterns of socialisation and social expectations, or are an accurate representation of how mentoring relationships function for men and women. Recent research by Hanham and Tracey (2017) offers an evaluation of mentoring relationships for young males specifically. Evidence from the study suggests that there is an overlap in the kind of support both males and females valued in their mentor; with males in the study stating the significance of their mentor as a 'guide' and 'confidant' (p.124), which were viewpoints expressed by women within this study as well.

Within criminological discourse it is widely accepted that men and women enter into the criminal justice system for different reasons and differing criminal behaviour. Community mentors commented on this as being a significant reason as to why one form of rehabilitation intervention, executed with the same principles and practices, would not be suitable for both men and women:

'If you look at those pathways in and out, it's obvious that its mental health and it's not the same with men, and it's [women's] relationships with men in many instances as well…

- Sally, Community Mentor

6.5. Chapter summary

The findings from this part of the study looked to establish whether mentoring could effectively target female criminogenic needs and explore the perceived impact of mentoring programmes. Establishing the impacts and benefits of mentoring for women is argued as significant data in order to understand what areas of need are targeted, and what elements are still missing from a robust mentoring intervention programme.

The outcomes of the study were able to offer an insight into how mentoring was able to address some of the key needs women had whilst in prison and when reintegrating back into the community. Whilst previous mentoring studies have proclaimed the importance of mentoring in prison and the community in terms of practical use, this study was unique in its focus on highlighting the emotional support offered as being the most beneficial aspect of the programme. Mentees expressed feeling emotionally supported by having a peer mentor, as it provided someone for them to talk to who was trustworthy and could relate to the struggles they were facing. One mentee discussed feeling 'empowered' as peer mentoring helped to facilitate goal setting and positive decision-making. The findings from interviews with the community mentors highlighted parallel positive roles that the mentors could play in their mentees lives, acting as an advocate alongside providing a strong, dependable relationship during difficult periods of readjustment, again emphasising the importance of the emotional support mentors provided. Mentoring could therefore be seen to reflect some of the key elements of a desistance approach, as understood by Maruna and LeBel (2010), in relation to what works in reducing reoffending: a movement away from interventions and organisations that 'provide correctional treatment' and towards programmes that are strengths-based and 'supporters of the desistance process', such as a mentoring programme for offenders (Maruna and LeBel, 2010: 67).

One of the most significant outcomes from the data in relation to impact, indicated the benefits of a peer mentoring programme for the *mentors* specifically; the role was crucial in providing meaningful time for the women in prison, enhanced skills and self-confidence, and assisting them to build a positive identity to conform to. This research therefore offers empirical evidence of the constructive outcomes of mentoring for both peer mentors and mentees. Mentoring was therefore able to offer peer mentors a 'stake in conformity' as it provided a reason for them to adjust their own behaviour and live up to their newfound role model status (Weaver and McNeill, 2007: 4).

When thinking about 'what works' with women in terms of recidivism and desistance following release from prison, previous rehabilitation models are seen to be ineffective at accounting for differences between male and female offending populations as well as the distinctive needs of women (Gelsthorpe, 2001). It is argued therefore that the conditions of a desistance model of rehabilitation can be related to a mentoring framework, advocating positive changes in personal identity and the development of a pro-social self through a positive mentoring relationship (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2015). In order for programme delivery to be effective it is essential that a 'gendered, responsive' intervention is incorporated that alleviates the 'social and structural conditions and constraints' that have previously shaped the lives of women in the criminal justice system (Radcliffe and Hunter, 2015: 2).

Chapter Seven: The Challenges and Complications of Mentoring Programmes

"Unfortunately, the prison system often contributes to the re-victimisation of these women by perpetuating feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability"

(Louise, 1998: 107)

'Trauma always occurs within a social context, and the social wounds require social healing'

(Covington, 2002: 14)

The above quotes by Louise and Covington set the framework for the nature of the problems with mentoring programmes as discussed within this chapter. The significance of trauma has been discussed throughout the study as a core element of women's experiences in the criminal justice system, and is evident in aspects of mentoring programmes for both peer mentors and mentees in prison. Issues of 're-victimisation' and powerlessness are therefore discussed within this chapter as significant disadvantages of mentoring programmes that are inadequately implemented.

This chapter presents the final findings section of this study, detailing the perceived challenges and constraints of mentoring programmes, both within prison peer programmes and a community setting. Firstly, the complications of mentoring within prison are focused on, discussing the concept of trauma and re-traumatisation for peer mentors specifically, and the apparent gaps in support and training for mentors, which appeared to exacerbate this problem further. This chapter also places a particular emphasis on examining the nature of power dynamics and elements of control within mentoring, highlighting some of the problems that serve to confound efforts to alleviate hierarchies from this form of intervention. Control and power are examined through the lens of misconduct and risk taking behaviour in prison, as well as power in the form of both internal

and external forms of control. Finally, a more concentrated focus on community-based criminal justice mentoring specifically is given, examining the challenges faced by these mentors in conducting the programme successfully outside of prison, as well as general problem areas associated with mentoring as a practice: the disparity in how mentoring is organised and conducted across multiple services, and the difficulty in defining and measuring mentoring as a contemporary rehabilitation practice.

7.1 Challenges for peer mentors: repeating past trauma

Although this study has set out multiple positive features of peer mentoring programmes, there are some significant challenges to the implementation and practice of mentoring within prison in particular that call into question its overall effectiveness. Previous literature (e.g. Pawson, 2004), focussing on prison-based peer programmes has addressed a number of the issues inherent to the mentoring practice. One of these key concerns is highlighted in research by Devilly and colleagues (2005), who look at the impact of vulnerable women attempting to address the needs of fellow vulnerable prisoners; such concerns centre on the possibility of creating further trauma, and/or re-traumatising towards the peer mentor by having them re-live distressing or upsetting experiences through mentoring discussions (Devilly *et al,* 2005). There is substantial research that has highlighted the high number of women who have experienced past trauma prior to being incarcerated, and have stated that it is often a key factor of their offending behaviour (e.g. Bloom, Owen and Covington, 2003: Covington and Bloom, 2008: Covington, 2002: Pollock, 2002). In relation to women especially, rehabilitation services that are 'trauma-informed' are essential to the success of gender-responsive programmes within the criminal justice system (Covington, 2007: Covington and Bloom, 2008: 10). In practice, Harris and Fallot (2001) dictate that a key prerequisite of a trauma-informed service should be to '*avoid* triggering trauma reactions and/or traumatising the individual' (as quoted in Covington and Bloom, 2008: 10; emphasis added),

rather than potentially *creating* them in the manner described by respondents in this study.

There is a question therefore of whether the peer mentor's mental health requirements and coping strategies are adequately met considering the similar issues of addiction, abuse and other forms of past trauma they are likely to have experienced. Heney and Kristiansen (1998) suggest that women in prison are more likely to be re-exposed to 'powerful traumatising processes' whilst incarcerated (Heney and Kristiansen, 1998 as quoted in Dirks, 2004; 106). Dirks (2004) agrees with this idea, stating that women's experiences of 're-victimisation and re-traumatisation' in prison need to be addressed by all aspects of the penal regime: in relation to staff, policies, programmes and penal procedures (Dirks, 2004: 102).

Present findings within this study support these claims, with peer mentors explaining that their role could be upsetting or distressing as a result of their *own* traumatic backgrounds, and the trauma 'stories' of the women they were mentoring. For example, one recovery mentor, Kylie, clarified that although she found the role enjoyable, there were obviously elements to it that could be challenging emotionally, particularly as she had 'been there' herself:

> *'Of course it can be difficult sometimes, I have feelings and when I hear other people's stories it does have an impact on me, I'm only human, and I've also been there… there are hurdles you have to reach, it's emotionally overwhelming in here to try and help someone'*
>
> - Kylie, Peer Mentor

Describing her role as 'emotionally overwhelming' reinforces the strain a peer mentoring role could have on the mentors themselves, particularly when – as was the case with Kylie- the mentor personally relates to many of the struggles her mentee was facing. As discussed within Chapter Five, although the mentees identified the importance of the peer mentor as a 'professional ex' being equated to a better 'quality' mentor – in that thy had the ability to relate to past

experiences, was regarded as one of the most positive elements of a peer mentoring programme. However, this could conversely be regarded as a *negative* aspect for the peer mentor themselves. In this instance, mentoring could in some ways be seen to reproduce the same 'negative relational bonds' that women experience prior to entering prison, in the way that they can inhibit recovery and resistance. The women acting as mentors are already vulnerable and are then put into a position of 'further vulnerability' that could be damaging to both their 'emotional and physical well-being' (Dirks, 2004: 106).

Jenny, a peer mentor in the recovery wing, discussed how much she enjoyed her role, despite occasionally finding the mentoring sessions emotionally draining. Throughout the interview, she touched on the more upsetting aspects of peer mentoring, and it was noted that she repeatedly described sessions with mentees as "*harrowing*" due to the wide range of disturbing and traumatic experiences so many of the women she spoke to had faced. Like Kylie, Jenny also touched on the particularly negative way in which mentoring could sometimes affect her:

> *'It can be hard, harrowing, especially if they've never spoken to anyone about these things before, sometimes I have to have a cry in my cell… I can hide it and cry back in my cell, I don't want them to think they upset me and to make them feel worse. But it can be quite harrowing'*
>
> - Jenny, Peer Mentor

It should be a priority to anyone concerned with the welfare of individuals in penal settings that the mentoring role, designed to enhance the skillset and employability potential of women in prison (among other things), could result in levels of emotional distress that the mentor felt compelled to hide. As many of the peer mentors had also described receiving minimal levels of support and training, there were limited forms of appropriate and effective coping strategies or means to manage the more difficult emotional aspects of peer mentoring. Following the interview Jenny had stated she would be leaving her position as peer mentor for 'personal reasons' and did not wish to expand on what these

might be. This was regarded as somewhat surprising considering the passion with which she had discussed her role. Buck (2013) suggests that it is crucial to acknowledge that mentors may be at different stages within their own recovery journey, and it is therefore important to consider this in relation to the levels of responsibility they are given (Buck, 2013).

As well as facilitating discussions of trauma, some mentors talked about finding it difficult to take their mind off certain mentees if they were not able to contact them easily and follow up on issues that had been spoken about. One peer mentor mentioned that it could be difficult to keep in contact with some women, particularly after their induction period, as they had no easy way of reaching them and the women were often housed in different areas of the prison. She discussed feeling anxious about not knowing how they were doing or being able to check on them,

> *'It should be feasible to check in on people, the women have no way to contact me after induction'*
>
> - Paula, Peer Mentor

When I stated that it must be a struggle for her not to know how the women she had spoken to is managing a few days later, she simply replied that she had "*learned to manage that*" and did not mention any form of outlet or way to manage her feelings about this.

7.2 Peer mentoring and coping mechanisms in prison

The comments made during interviews regarding the potential emotional impact of peer mentoring were especially concerning considering the low level of support and training provided for peer mentors, as discussed within Chapter Four of the study. Despite the need for sufficient support for peer mentors being regarded as an essential element of successful implementation of such

programmes (Woodall *et al*, 2015), there was little mention by the peer mentors interviewed of this being the case. It was therefore unknown as to whether or not effective coping strategies were currently in place in the prison that were managed and supported by staff.

The concept of coping with imprisonment has long been an area of interest within criminology in relation to both male and female prisoners. Within sociological research in particular the 'pains of imprisonment' (Skyes, 1958) have been emphasised along with a more contemporary focus on the concept of prisoner well-being in relation to mental health (e.g. Liebling, 2004). Over time, these standard 'pains' have shifted, parallel to the shifts in the management of offenders and their incarcerations, leading to an interest in the commensurate 'new pains of imprisonment' discussed by Crewe (2011), which extend to include the 'depth, weight and tightness' of the carceral experience. When discussing the mentoring sessions with peer mentors, women were questioned about what mechanisms, if any, they employed to cope with the role. One mentor described being able to confide in her 'pad mate' as a way of unburdening her feelings following a difficult session, whilst two others said they were able to talk through the mentoring sessions with fellow peer mentors. Although it could be regarded as positive that the peer mentors had some form of outlet, there is still concern as to whether this form of support is significant enough to adequately provide for the emotional well-being of a significantly vulnerable population. This should also raise concerns regarding the impacts of peers continuing to pass on the information they have heard to other inmates and continue the 'level of burden' (Covington, 2002: 7); this essentially relates back to the concepts of re-traumatisation, with the passing on of often overwhelming or upsetting problems from one (vulnerable) person to another. In terms of relating these concepts back to the idea of addressing the challenges of mentoring, dealing with the emotional stresses and strains through discussions with other mentors is also problematic because it undermines the confidentiality agreement which – barring disclosures of harm or intent to harm oneself or another – is designed to protect the privacy of the mentees. This concern arose repeatedly during the interviews, with more than one woman stating that peer mentors were

"*untrustworthy*", due to the belief that they discussed the details of (supposedly private and confidential) mentoring sessions with each other. And while the peer mentors interviewed corroborated this point, they did not perceive this to be negative, instead reflecting on the importance of being able to offload some of their mentoring 'burden' in this way.

Another mentor interviewed also touched on this concept of inadequate care or training for her role. Diana discussed at length her time as a peer mentor, both within Bronzefield and at another prison previously, and the different roles she undertook. Her passion for the role had come across throughout the interview, until she began to discuss the *"barbaric"* way in which she was dismissed from the role in Bronzefield and the consequent distress that this had caused her. She stated she had received no help or "*follow-up support"* to deal with losing a job that had been so significant to her time within prison:

> *'I shouldn't have been sacked, I was just dropped and I don't have anyone to talk to about it. The system doesn't work as well as it could… the way they manage the situation is barbaric…'*
>
> - Diana, Peer Mentor

Again the idea of peer mentors not having a sufficient way to deal with their own feelings is brought out clearly through the above quote. Diana gave a graphic account of the level of harm that this incident had had on her, indicating the detrimental impact of failing to appropriately and effectively support and manage the peer mentoring role:

> *'I had to crawl my way back up- I did some of the worst self-harm I've ever done in prison over this*'
>
> - Diana, Peer Mentor

This disclosure of self-harm reinforces the level of distress that vulnerable women can be open to if peer mentoring roles in prison are not sufficiently or

appropriately managed by staff, and reiterates the necessity of implementing this form of programme alongside robust support and management. In some cases, the vulnerability of the peer mentors was linked to physical – as well as emotional – health concerns; Paula discussed having her own significant mental and physical health problems;

> *'With MS disease you can look upset easily, it can be difficult to manage in here* [MS]*, I'm dragging my feet and letting it get to me, my emotions are doing a rollercoaster, but there are other people in here crying too… if the women are crying, then I cry too, I'm a sympathy crier'*
>
> - Paula, Peer Mentor

In such instances, one must question whether the role of peer mentor was appropriate for Paula, given her condition, and what checks and balances – if any – exist, or failed, in this system to ensure that women like Paula are not coming to harm as a result of a well-intentioned but perhaps misguided attempt to 'rehabilitate'.

7.3 Peer mentoring in prison: The (mis) use of power and issues of control

The concept of 'power' in prisons is another common area of discussion within criminological discourse in relation to all aspects of penology. Theories of masculinity and constraint conventionally dominate a large degree of this area of prison research when attempting to understand power constructions within a penal setting. In relation to power and women's imprisonment, sociological theorists have instead tended to focus on concepts of resistance and response to oppression (e.g. Bosworth, 1999: Bosworth and Carrabine 2001). For incarcerated women, Bosworth dictates that it is 'their motivations and sense of self', that can indicate the way in which power relations are negotiated and managed in prison (Bosworth, 1999: 2). Currently there is only a limited degree

of research that focuses on the concept of power imbalances in peer mentoring specifically. Buck (2016) states that the majority of research that does focus on peer mentoring gives greater prominence to the degree of 'functional worth' that mentoring is able to provide, with fewer studies concentrating on the dynamics of peer mentoring (Buck, 2016: 347). During the analysis of the interview data, this perception of peer mentoring as a form of individual power was brought out, as well as mentoring in relation to elements of control.

Research from Rowe (2015) situates constraint within the prison as being intersected with four key areas: *visibility, discipline, functional dependency and hierarchy* (Rowe, 2015: 335). Each of these areas in turn can be seen as relevant when attempting to understand how the peer mentoring role functions within a female prison setting. In terms of 'visibility and discipline', Rowe (2015) suggests that prisons are 'socially intense' environments, where relationships are influenced by notions of power and control, and are always conducted under the gaze of 'others', with regard to both staff and prisoner interactions and peer interactions (p. 335). The disciplinary nature of the prison also dictates the way in which these relationships are managed. Peer mentoring is therefore interesting in relation to disciplines and sanctions, as during the interviews a number of respondents identified mentors as being able to avoid typical admonishment due to their position of 'power' within the prison:

> *'If the peer mentors and the listeners do something less than appropriate then a blind eye is turned, rules are ignored for certain women'*
>
> - Diana, Peer Mentor

Other women stated that mentors enjoyed the benefit of better relations with staff and subsequently preferential treatment. Peer mentors stated that staff had more trust in the mentors and Listeners, and that fellow prisoners also had a different view of the mentor;

'It's slightly different in the way officers treat you and how other prisoners look at you; they [staff] have more faith in your abilities, they know they can rely on you…'

- Natalie, Peer Mentor

Diana indicated however that this was problematic, and discussed the idea that mentoring in the prison could be used as a "divisive tool", for demarcating between the 'in' group and the 'out' group, with peer mentors and Listeners representing the former and benefitting from the privileges of being in such a comparatively powerful position than their fellow prisoners:

'It encourages cliques between the peer mentors and the prisoners, who have less say about who joins the cliques… the Listeners have all the say. It's not appropriate, and it's the same with the recovery peer mentors'

- Diana, Peer Mentor

This was commented on by several of the peer mentors interviewed and gave the impression that this 'other' status gave feelings of pride and accomplishment to the mentors within the role. It was interesting to note that Diana referred to the peer mentors in comparison to '*the prisoners'*, suggesting their status as 'regular' prisoners was in question. This suggestion of mentoring effectively placing women at odds with each other is discussed in previous research by Mageehon (2008) who states that in prison, 'women learn quickly that they must negotiate power against one another rather than to benefit each other' (p.488). Following these comments, about peer mentors 'having a say' about who joins the mentoring 'clique', I asked other peer mentors whether they felt they were influential in identifying and placing certain women in a peer mentoring role. While some peer mentors stated that it was the job of the prison staff to dictate who was allocated the role, others commented that they could "*put women forward"* or identify certain women to staff that they felt were right for the role, and that these recommendations would often factor in staff decision-making

regarding this. This idea of the mentors being able to determine who was given the preferential position of peer mentor seemed to further the suggestion of the presence of unbalanced power dynamics and a heightened level of authority amongst peer mentors. When asking the peer mentors their thoughts on mentors being seen as a '*clique',* the responses suggested this to be down to *"jealousy"* amongst other prisoners:

> *'It's mainly the feelings of people who would never make the role so they put it down, because they would never get there'*
>
> -Emma, Peer Mentor

This concept of peer mentors being marked as different to other prisoners, and receiving preferential treatment as a result, is in line with Carlen's (1983) suggestion that prison staff hold the power to determine and define prisoners status. This was brought out in the interviews with many women having perceptions of staff having *"more faith in their abilities"* or having more "*trust*" for peer mentors. It was observed during the interviews that peer mentors did not recognise their questionable level of authority over other women in the prison as something that was potentially problematic; rather, the role was regarded by mentors as "*the best job in the jail"* (Irene, Peer Mentor) and something to aspire towards. This reiterates Kavanagh and Borrill's (2013) perception of peer mentoring as being 'empowering' within a prison setting for mentors, as they are regarded as being in a position with some form of control when they had typically only ever experienced feelings of powerlessness (p. 403).

Kavanagh and Borrill also discuss the concept that mentors can feel a degree of 'superiority' (p. 403) over their fellow prisoners because of their greater freedom of movement around the prison as well as the level of trust instilled in them by prison staff; a concept reflected in the words of one peer mentor, Emma, who described how women in the prison occasionally perceived mentors as being like "*officers without keys",* suggesting that they existed at a different level of hierarchy in comparison to other prisoners;

'Some assume we are officers without keys, that argument is difficult to disprove in an amicable kind of way… there are a few people who think that, but it's jealousy, which I never understood'

- Emma, Peer Mentor

This quote from Emma suggests it is easy to see why other prisoners would compare peer mentors to prison officers, indicating the differential treatment and advantages the role is seen to provide. However, this was rarely problematised, and peer mentors frequently dismissed the unease of other prisoners about their level of assumed higher authority as 'feelings of jealousy' about the role. This is arguably a key area of contest in relation to the use of peer mentoring in prison, as women being mentored may feel undermined by the level of authority their peer mentor is assumed to have and may begin to identify peer mentors as another form of authority figure within the prison, effectively constraining one of the most beneficial aspects of a peer mentoring programme; i.e. that they are separate from or not of 'the system'.

One of the most concerning issues raised in relation to the abuse of power among peer mentors related to the idea that certain mentors were using their enhanced level of movement around the prison for personal gain – specifically to use '*call outs*' (i.e. prisoner requests for peer mentor support) as an opportunity for sexual contact with prisoners on house blocks that would otherwise have been inaccessible to them - and that although some staff were aware of this they chose to ignore it;

'They use call outs to have sex and staff turn a blind eye… they're allowed to double up on the spur when they're [the peer mentors] *in a relationship which is against the rules… women don't feel that they are equal'*

- Diana, Peer Mentor

Diana discussed at length the ways in which she felt peer mentors did not have to comply with the same penal regulations as fellow prisoners. This concept of not being 'equal' goes against core assumptions of how peer mentoring can be beneficial in terms of women feeling that they are able to offload any problems or difficulties to someone they can trust who was in a similar situation, with no element of hierarchy.

Despite the range of literature that focuses on the concept of sexual behaviour within women's prisons (Giallombardo, 1966, Greer, 2000: Ward and Kassebaum, 1964), this predominantly focuses on notions of sexual exploitation (primarily by staff) and power dynamics, rather than as 'rule-breaking' within prison. This problem of peer mentoring in prison and breaching regulations however, has been brought out in previous research, such as that by Woodall and colleagues (2015), who noted that peer mentoring could 'potentially jeopardise security imperatives' and the safety of the institution due to difficulties with abuse of power within the mentoring position (Woodall *et al*, 2015: 6). These findings also link back to the concept of power dynamics within the prison and the way in which the peer mentoring position was able to warrant a more 'powerful' position in the prison, with women regarded to be using this perceived power as a mechanism for personal gain.

Other mentees interviewed in the recovery wing also touched on this idea of mentoring as a cover for specific types of 'rule breaking' in relation to drug use in the prison. During the interviews, two women stated that some of the peer mentors were using their position and heightened freedom of movement to carry drugs around the prison undetected, and were reportedly not challenged by the staff because of their positions as mentors:

> *'There's at least one mentor running around for a girl, dealing Subutex[8], running around the house block… but then the one that was caught with the Subutex is now in segregation, not the mentor…'*

[8] Buprenorphine – more commonly known by its brand name of Subutex – is typically used in the detoxification and treatment of heroin addiction.

- Hannah, Mentee

Within criminological discourse discussions around drug use in prisons indicate how the use and distribution of illegal substances can serve to heighten pre-existing inequalities between more vulnerable prisoners as well as furthering the degree of power imbalances (cf. Crewe, 2005, 2006). Kolind and Duke (2016) also comment that drug selling is closely related to elements of internal hierarchies and identities, and can subsequently influence all aspects of social and personal interactions within prison.

Finally it is worth considering the elements of 'control', both direct and indirect, which were attempting to rein in some of the power afforded to peer mentors, Steinder and Wooldredge (2009) explain these forms of controls as follows;

> 'Direct controls are purposeful efforts to prevent or restrict deviance, where as indirect controls develop from role relationships'. (2009: 438).

Although indiscretions with substance misuse in relation to peer mentors was not a topic originally explored in the interview schedule, two mentees in the recovery wing brought this issue up naturally during the course of the interview, with both claiming this issue to be common knowledge. It is unclear to what extent peer mentors were seen to fuel problems with drug control within HMP/YOI Bronzefield, however it was felt that it was deemed significant information to include within the findings. This could lead to further thought around the concept of how much 'freedom' a peer mentor should reasonably have and what kind of boundaries, or lack of, are set up by staff to ensure mentoring is carried out successfully within the confines of acceptable penal restrictions. This was also deemed interesting due to the limited degree of empirical research regarding rule infringements and violations in female prisons, as the majority of research on this area is related to male samples only or collective data of both males and females (Steiner and Wooldredge, 2009). This issue obviously raises questions as to how the prison staff attempt to manage

peer mentor movement around the prison and whether greater supervision is required to limit this kind of behaviour. There is also concern regarding the disclosure that staff are aware of women abusing their positions in this way and yet do not intervene to prevent this from happening.

The concept of indirect control has been commented on by Buck (2016) as a key dynamic present within the peer mentoring relationship, particularly in relation to the idea of goal setting. Buck (2016) stipulates that mentoring involves inherent power dynamics through the way in which mentors were positioned as 'not being coercive, whilst subtly exhibiting an experimental authority' (p. 281). In this way, peer mentoring can be regarded as an implicit form of control in the way advice and support are organised. Peer mentors were recorded as using their own life experience and thoughts about criminal behaviour to influence the way in which mentees worked towards a changed identity. One mentor, Olivia, suggested that it can be difficult sometimes to know how to "*advise*" and support mentees without perceiving – by staff or the women – to have been forceful or coercive:

> *'If they've got a lot of problems then you can advise them, but then the staff will sometimes turn around and say, 'you shouldn't have done that', and that 'it's not your place''.*
>
> - Olivia, Peer Mentor

Knowing one's 'place' was an area of conflict for peer mentors as well as their level of authority within the prison environment. Peer mentors also touched on this idea of control when they discussed the rejection of their authority by other women in the prison:

> *'Some women have said before, 'who do you think you are? You've got a number too.'*
>
> *- Natalie, Peer Mentor*

However, Natalie appeared to perceive her role as being one in which being able to exert a degree of control over the women she mentored was acknowledged and accepted as being part of the 'benefit' of being a peer mentor, and that having the other women treat her as *"just a prisoner"* was therefore an obstacle to the degree of efficacy she could have within this role, suggesting the idea that mentors required a certain element of direct control and power in order to undertake their role properly:

> [How you are treated by other prisoners]'*Is one of the biggest obstacles - I've been in the classroom and they've said: 'You're not a Miss [an officer]; you're one of us', you have to learn to be tough about it, you've got to be mentally tough and don't take things personally'*
>
> - Natalie, Peer Mentor

The comment that other women in the class would state that Natalie was 'not a miss' suggested interesting parallels to the way in which peer mentors and other prisoners perceived their roles. For Natalie, the other prisoners identifying her as a fellow inmate and failing to acknowledge her perceived position of (relative) power and (desired) control came across as belittling to the role she perceived she played within the prison, and the significance she attached to this. Peer mentors marking themselves out to be distinctive from mentees could therefore be seen as another way in which women in the prison attempted to 'broker' their power in order to gain a sense of control (Mageehon, 2008).

7.4 Conflicting definitions: the disparity of mentoring practices

Prior to conducting the fieldwork research, it was necessary to build a catalogue of literature illustrating the use of mentoring programmes within a criminal justice setting. While there is still emerging data relating to mentoring as a form of offender intervention, the concept of mentoring in this context is still lacking an adequate, all encompassing definition. The use of 'mentoring' and 'peer'

support programmes in the context of building cohesive communities and developing social capital has been supported and promoted by government policies more recently (Philip and Sprat, 2007; Zimmeck, 2010). As discussed previously within the literature review, Aitken (2014) suggests mentoring with offenders as being composed of a 'voluntary relationship of engagement, encouragement and trust' offering guidance and support (p. 11). Although this definition works well in relation to how mentoring is conducted within prison and the community, the actual practices described and witnessed within the current study differed considerably between community organisations and across different areas of the prison estate.

The following sections examine the departure from such definitions of mentoring, and the various forms which 'mentoring' took in both the prison and the community.

7.4.1 What 'mentoring' meant at HMP/YOI Bronzefield

All 'mentoring' practices identified in the current study taking place at HMP/YOI Bronzefield occurred within a peer-to-peer context; that is where prisoners were providing support to other prisoners. Woodall and colleagues (2015: 1) discuss that varying approaches and roles within peer interventions are often to be found in prison, and range from 'peer education, mentoring, and peer support' to 'peer counselling and peer training'. At Bronzefield in particular, the aims and objectives of peer mentoring also varied considerably, both across different areas of the prison and in the context of what was understood to be the role of peer mentors. One mentor managed to succinctly sum up these disparities and lack of consistency by stating;

> *'There's different aims* [of mentoring] *in different prisons* [Through mentoring*]. Bronzefield attempts to fill all holes'*
>
> - Jenny, Peer Mentor

The idea of filling '*all holes*' was observed to be an accurate representation of the way in which peer mentoring was organised across the prison. Previous literature relating to prison-based peer mentoring programmes suggests that mentoring can be effectively used across different sectors of the prison and to target different interventions, such as within education (Devilly *et al*, 2003) and with mentors in the form of resettlement champions (Fletcher and Batty, 2012), in addition to being part of the support package for addiction recovery, as in the current study. However, the problem with a lack of core definition of the peer mentoring role is that it is also open to interpretation, to the extent that it can be considered to be a panacea for a range of problem areas within the prison. For half of the peer mentors interviewed, their role could be argued as being more commonly defined and understood as 'classroom assistants' rather than peer mentors, whose position in the prison was more in line with assisting teachers within the prison, and whose role was to manage the class size or to offer individualised assistance with work during lessons. When asked how she would classify and describe her peer mentoring role, Grace replied;

> '*I'm a classroom assistant, working Monday to Thursday afternoons… There's eight women in the class at different levels, I regularly help with the Level 2 and 3 women.'*
>
> - Grace, Peer Mentor

The difficulty with ascribing the label of 'mentor' to a classroom assistant role is that it can undermine the use of peer mentors and the type of support they can provide. For these women interviewed, the 'mentoring' role encompassed a more practical position of providing educational assistance within the prison; indeed, the following quote from Yvonne suggests that her position in the classroom was more to do with providing support and assistance to the prison staff, rather than supporting fellow prisoners;

'If you see something going on in the classroom you have to tell the teacher, if people are trading or something, you have to feel comfortable telling them'

- Yvonne, Peer Mentor

This was in contrast to mentors in the recovery wing, who discussed providing a more emotionally supportive and aspirational role to the mentees that was more in accordance with traditional mentoring models in criminal justice settings.

This quote from Yvonne suggests that her position in the classroom was more to do with providing support and assistance to the prison staff, rather than supporting fellow prisoners. This raises concerns once again with regard to the level of presumed authority peer mentors are given within their role and the inherent suggestion that they are able to command control of the classroom if left unsupervised. The previous quotes around the misconceptions of power relations between peer mentors and mentee and how this arises are therefore all the more understandable.

As well as the multiple ways and contexts in which the term 'mentoring' was used within the prison, there was also no set structure to the way in which peer mentoring was conducted, either within education or the recovery wing. Peer mentors discussed just doing it '*my own way*' and learning how to work with their mentees as they went along, responding to the women in the way they deemed most suitable (albeit without any training on how to do so). Jenny, a peer mentor in the recovery wing, discussed her one-to-one mentoring sessions as well as the recovery group she conducted:

'I do it my own way, I just throw subjects out there and get the first person started talking on it, it's all about the recovery journey, so I ask them at the first one, 'where were you as a person when you took drugs?' Then, 'where are you now?', and 'where will you be in the future?' It's not like a classroom

atmosphere, it's very relaxed and friendly… if you want to do it you do it, and some things stick whilst you're in there'

- Jenny, Peer Mentor

Jenny's description of her sessions as 'relaxed' and 'friendly' fit with the holistic and strengths-based environment, which is regarded as essential when undertaking intervention work with vulnerable women (Bloom and Covington, 1998: Covington, 2002: Morash *et al*, 1998). However the unstructured nature of the sessions and the concept of the mentor doing things 'her way' does suggest that there is limited supervision or coordination of the mentoring programme, and therefore the effectiveness of the intervention can be questionable as it does appear to be properly managed. This concern was brought into sharp relief when Jenny continued that there was no real structure to the sessions or how long the intervention would last for; that there was *'no real proper ending'* and that sessions could last *'anything from five minutes to hours'* (Jenny, Peer Mentor). There was no consideration here about the appropriate length of time for such an emotional exchange to take place, although given the absence of training, this is perhaps of little surprise.

The notion of 'mentoring' itself was seen as a positive intervention; however, it was the failure to robustly define, structure and oversee practices of 'mentoring' at Bronzefield that was perceived to be the key issue, as Diana explained;

'A lot of women here are being neglected. By improving the peer mentoring support it could help so many women… [But as it is currently] *the support here is not meeting the needs of women; its just token gestures'*

- Diana, Peer Mentor

Along with potential problems with the understanding of the mentor role and the disconnected implementation of the programme, another concern identified by respondents was the understanding that, despite trying to use mentoring to

'fill all the holes' in support provision, it was clear that the demand for such support was not being met by the prison. Further, at least four potential interview participants identified to me as being a current mentor or mentee, did not know what a 'peer mentor' was or how to find out any more information about them. An example of this was with one woman from the education wing, Michelle, who said that she had struggled to cope – both practically and emotionally - while in prison, and had attempted to reach out to both the Listeners and the Samaritans for support. However, despite being identified to me by prison staff as someone currently receiving peer mentoring within the education department, Michelle explained that this was not the case;

> *'I don't have a specific peer mentor. I just need all the support I can get… It would be nice to have a specific mentor that's there for me'*
>
> - Michelle, mentee

As well as some women not being informed of the peer mentoring programme, another mentee, Hannah, discussed how overstretched the mentors currently were and the difficulty they had in spending sufficient time with all mentees assigned to them:

> *'I was here last October and I didn't get to see a mentor. I know they're here but they had so many girls to see and not enough time to see them. They do what they can,* [but you need to remember*] they're prisoners too'*
>
> - Hannah, Mentee

In this, Hannah raises an important point that appeared to be overlooked by the prison – that regardless of how they identified themselves through their role, the women acting as peer mentors were still 'prisoners'. This observation lends itself to the need to again raise the question of the potential harms of this well-meaning scheme, and to question the impact of overburdening some of the women in this way.

7.4.2. What 'mentoring' meant within non-peer, community-based practices

As discussed within the literature review, changing policy developments have led to a growth in the delivery of improved resettlement services for women in the community which emphasises the necessity of targeting gender-specific needs (Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2010). This development of effective interventions is a response in part to the growing numbers of incarcerated women in England and Wales, leading to a critique of the current provisions available for women upon release in order to reduce levels of recidivism (Gelsthorpe and Sharpe, 2010: Martin *et al*, 2009). It was therefore regarded as significant to explore exactly how this intervention was executed across the range of community-based projects.

It was somewhat surprising that as within the prison context, the community-based mentors interviewed all conveyed different understandings about what mentoring involved and how it should be delivered, which ranged from advocacy to signposting, and from a fleeting 'wishy-washy, hand-holding' to something 'deep', trusting and 'on going';

> *'I think it's really a matter of being an advocate for the mentee… I really went in with no expectations but I knew it wasn't going to be a matter of giving them advice because I don't think that's fair'*
>
> - Nicky, Community Mentor

> *[*The purpose of mentoring*] is to try and move people on… I like it because it's continuous and it's not a once and for all thing; it's on-going work, it's deep work… '*
>
> - Sally, Community Mentor

'It can be seen as quite a gentle, wishy-washy, hand-holding project'

- Anna, Community Mentor

'It's to offer support and encouragement, and maybe offering a different perspective to somebody… just building up a new relationship with somebody that you can trust and someone that can maybe signpost or suggest different, you know, groups that they can get involved in… that kind of thing'

- Sam, Community Mentor

Whilst all mentors had very positive perceptions and understandings of what a mentor is and how mentoring works, the disparity between mentors from each of the three community-based organisations interviewed suggests that different programmes and geographical locales have distinct methods of carrying out mentoring services, as well as different areas of focus.

Sally, a community mentor with the *Pecan* programme, discussed her unease with the term 'mentor' and what that definition may suggest:

''Mentor' gives the impression of a bit too much of a one-way street, that I have some kind of wisdom that I'm going to impart and that's not true'

- Sally, Community Mentor

Sally felt that the mentoring programme was predominantly about working together with her mentee, rejecting the notion of the mentor as a 'role model'.
Maria, a mentor within the *Brighton Inspire Project*, had similar misgivings about her understanding of the word mentor in relation to this form of intervention. For Maria, the term was seen as being appealing to women, whereas she perceived the term 'coaching' to be more of a 'masculine' concept:

'I think the terminology is important, because if you called it 'coaching' for example, that would appeal, in my guess, to men more… a lot of the time the things I've been doing with my mentee, because of her needs and what she wanted and where she's at, it felt, a lot of the time, like I was coaching actually rather than actually mentoring'

- Maria, Community Mentor

When questioned further about the differences between 'mentoring' and 'coaching', Maria was clear in her understanding of them as distinct:

MH: *Okay, is there a big difference between mentoring and coaching? I've heard about coaching workshops in prisons?*

Maria: *Well my understanding is that to be a coach you need some relevant experience and qualifications that relate to the 'coachee's' aspirations… so if you think of a coach, as in a sports coach for example, the coach has got the experience and the qualification, so if you see that analogy?*

MH: *Yes, that does make it clearer*

Maria: *Where as with mentoring, it's not important, it doesn't matter whether I've shared the experiences of my mentee and whether I've been to prison, or whether I've been involved in the criminal justice system, I can still be a good mentor, but I don't have to have had that experience, that's the difference between coaching and mentoring*

The above exchange during the interview brought out an interesting point with regard to what makes a 'good' mentor. As discussed within Chapter Four previously, for mentors in the community having similar experiences of criminal behaviour was not seen as important with regards to the quality of the role they were able to provide. This also further illustrates the point about a confusion over how mentoring is understood and should be carried out; suggesting a

qualification or experience was not necessary to practice mentoring and gives the impression it can be done by just about anyone. This is concerning given the vulnerable nature of those typically in receipt of mentoring services.

This notion of different definitions and processes was something that Mary, another community mentor, described as a distinctly negative aspect of this form of rehabilitation programme, and one which she linked to the comparative novelty of 'mentoring' and, consequently, the absence of a sound 'best practice' or evidence base for this. Mentoring as a concept is lacking in a developed theoretical basis or clarified definition, which may make it harder to streamline implementation across multiple services (Buck, 2016). Mary suggested that while mentoring has its clear benefits, it should not be a stand-alone intervention, primarily because of the ways support can vary, depending on the individual mentor and service-user (as demonstrated during the research interviews), and the way in which mentoring as a concept is interpreted. Instead, Mary argued for the need for a '*multi-model approach*' to rehabilitation programmes for women, a concept that parallels previous models of 'what works' with female offenders:

> *'Probably mentoring's place is part of a multi-model approach… it's flexible which is great, it's also variable which is not great, and sadly because it's new there's not a best practice for it, it varies between services and mentors, so I think it shouldn't be a primary support system, it should be mentoring and whatever else is going on… it could be a lot more streamlined'*
>
> - Mary, Community Mentor

These distinctions around how mentoring is carried out were also touched on previously within this study (Chapter Four) in relation to the different forms of formal, and arguably very *in*formal, training community mentors received prior to undertaking the role. This was thought to be concerning considering the variety of problems and the level of vulnerability of the women entering into the community mentoring programmes. Mary once again touched on these

limitations of service suggesting that further training in certain areas was necessary and that the limited and varied element of the mentor training could be argued as making the service less valuable:

> *'One of the things that's hard about executing mentoring well is the service has very little control and supervision over the practice, which is quite unusual. So we recruit these volunteers, [but] they're not evaluated as stringently as they're meant to be, the training is loose, the support is there but it's not pushed… you kind of have no idea what's going on in that hour session'*
>
> - Mary, Community Mentor

Mary's comments served to effectively sum up the key concerns with regard to this form of intervention programme, highlighting in particular the difficulty in evaluating the service provision and the quality of the mentor provided.

7. 5. Chaotic lifestyles post release

As with the peer mentors within the prison, mentoring in the community also presented with a degree of challenges and difficulties, at both a practical level and on a more emotive one. When questioned about problems or complications with practice, all mentors discussed some form of difficulty in conducting the mentoring programme. Issues around ensuring consistency with contact and mentoring sessions, as well as problems in communication, were all drawn upon as frustrations in the mentoring session and potential barriers to the development of a beneficial relationship. One participant disclosed that her mentee had gone back to prison during her involvement in the programme:

> *'I had a woman who had a warrant out for her arrest, and you won't see someone that has a warrant out, because if I'm with them then I should tell*

the police… If they're in prison they obviously cant [contact you] and that's where you write a lot. So if they're in prison and not coming out for a few months you might only visit them once a month…'

- Sally, Community Mentor

The issue of remaining in contact and establishing routine mentoring sessions with women who have persistently chaotic lives was touched upon by several participants and described as both frustrating and occasionally distressing:

'It's just like constant risks, constant re-assessment, constantly being alive to the possibility of trouble'

- Sally, Community Mentor

'I didn't phone this woman on Monday, because I was doing something else, and I didn't get round to calling her yesterday until about 16:30pm, by the time I phoned her she hadn't eaten for two days, she was in a state, in a really bad way'

- Jessica, Community Mentor

The volatile nature of many of the mentees' lives was also commented on as presenting a possible challenge to the mentoring relationship. One participant described a mentees violent relationship with an ex partner and the difficulty in helping her to understand risk-taking behaviour:

'She hadn't seen him for 18 months or something and then I met her one day, and he'd been calling her and texting her and sort of harassing her really, and then I saw her and she had seen him and slept with him… things like that are gutting… that has just opened the door to ten types of madness that we didn't have to worry about last week'

- Sally, Community Mentoring

Both Sally and Jessica's experiences of the challenges they faced in successfully building a trusting, beneficial mutual relationship highlight the different needs and problems women face upon release from prison and the subsequent means by which mentoring programmes need to adapt and alter their intervention in order for it to be effective and meaningful.

7.6. Measuring impact

Previous studies looking at the impact of community-based support programmes for women more generally have produced some positive data regarding the benefits of these forms of programme for women (Joliffe *et al*, 2011). However, Gelsthorpe and Hedderman (2009) point out the inconsistencies between different projects and the ability to measure outcomes for women involved in these programmes, with the resulting outcome meaning that it is difficult to identify what represents 'success' in such interventions. This same inconsistency in measuring impact was observed when undertaking the research interviews with the community mentors. As discussed previously, for all mentors in the community the concept of 'goal setting' was a key part of the structure of the mentoring programme. Prior research for mentoring within a criminal justice context has commented on the importance of the kind of strategies used within mentoring and how it is practised in relation to matching mentors to mentees and devising goals and objectives for the programme (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005). Setting targets and accomplishing a set goal was also the way in which the majority of organisations measured the progress of the mentoring journey. When asked in the interviews with community mentors how mentoring 'effectiveness' is measured, all participants suggested that 'achieving goals' was a means to indicate progress and validate the programmes ability to provide support and help to the women. Whilst this is practical in terms of providing a definitive 'yes' or 'no' to whether the desired outcomes of a mentoring programme have been achieved, this results in pressure on both the mentee *and* the mentor, as discussed by Mary:

'Defining a [required] *outcome is tricky and also that format puts pressure on the mentors to feel like they need to be reaching tangible goals every week.'*

- Mary, Community Mentor

Recent rehabilitation reforms, such as the Payment by Results (PBR) scheme, has resulted in the measurement of impact becoming a crucial aspect of the service in order to determine the direction of funding and resources. The PBR scheme came forth following the government's recent strategy for reducing reoffending rates under the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' initiative'. Among other areas of concern, mentoring programmes were discussed as a key strategy to inform recidivism policies, calling for a change in resettlement services and new payment incentives (Ministry of Justice, 2013). The subsequent PBR scheme introduced a system that dictates provision of funding as determined by the level of reduction in reoffending that a set programme is able to achieve (Bardens and Grimwood, 2013: Gelsthorpe and Hedderman, 2009). As many charity organisations that provide specialist services for women have limited financial capital, the introduction of the PBR scheme makes sustaining these organisations a lot more difficult (Women in Prison, 2017). Measuring outcomes and defining progress in this way could therefore detract from the more emotive successes of mentoring and fails to recognise or measure the development of a trusting, positive relationship, which is unarguably the key, defining feature of a mentoring intervention, instead focusing on contact hours, which Mary was not convinced was a '*good*' measure of service efficacy:

'A lot of measures are going on - I don't know if any have managed to capture the progress of the mentoring. The way it works is that after every meeting the mentor will feed back to their manager saying how long they've spent together, so that gets summed up in monthly statistics… I'm not really sure if it's a good measure of what it's saying'

- Mary, Community Mentor

The above quote from Mary reinforced the difficulty of measuring positive outcomes of mentoring, and subsequently directing future funding resources, in this way as it fails to capture the different aspects of mentoring interventions and how it might be meaningful in a woman's life.

7.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the core challenges relating to the use of mentoring programmes within the criminal justice service for female offenders. For peer mentors in prison, the difficult nature of discussing past trauma and recovery with the women and the level of re-traumatisation that could occur presented as a problematic aspect to the role and may limit the degree to which it can benefit both mentors and mentees. A lack of appropriate management and coordination by staff in relation to training and support for peer mentors was also regarded as a negative impact towards the programme as mentors commented on needing improved coping mechanisms and guidance to undertake mentoring effectively.

Another significant finding during the interviews with the peer mentors was the degree to which mentoring furthered inherent power dynamics between women in the prison. Peer mentoring has previously been recognised as more productive than authoritative interventions for its ability to limit feelings of powerlessness and control (Buck, 2016; Kavanagh and Borrill, 2013). Despite these suggestions, from the interviews undertaken within the study it was still apparent that power differences could not be eliminated entirely from the relationship; peer mentors were remarked as using their position to distribute contraband drugs around the prison and were regarded as being in a more esteemed position because of their role. This has been discussed in previous research by Wheatley (2007) and South *et al* (2016) who dictated that peer networks, such as those said to form during peer mentoring, may encourage this form of risky behaviour through the abuse of power, such as drug supply or even episodes of bullying and isolation amongst other prisoners. The women touched

on issues of favouritism by staff and mentors receiving preferential treatment, as well as the concept of peer mentors observing themselves to be in a position of authority over other prisoners. This perceived hierarchy of peer mentors is detrimental to the peer mentoring programme; mentors may not be seen as trustworthy or relatable if these forms of power dynamics pervade and persist the understandings of the peer mentoring role. As well as concerns relating to the position of the peer mentor, the actual term 'peer mentor' was seen as being used to encompass a broad range of roles and responsibilities, with no distinction between the peer mentors in recovery and in the classroom.

When reflecting back to the original research aims and objectives of the study, one of the central research questions looked to determine what the underlying practices and principles of mentoring were. Having interviewed women within prison and mentors within the community, it is clear there is still a significant level of disparity between how mentoring programmes are organised and the aspects of mentoring that are seen as beneficial. For women in the community organisations, different degrees of training, regulation and measurements for success means that there is no set, streamlined service available for women when released from prison as training and support varied from one programme to another. There is a question therefore as to whether the desistance process can still be influenced by mentoring programmes despite its pitfalls and inconsistencies.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The focus of this study has been the experiences and impact of mentoring programmes for women within the criminal justice system, looking at peer mentoring in prison and the community. The study adopted a gender-focused framework, underpinned by desistance theory, in order to explore whether mentoring for women was able to connect to the process of desistance. By employing a 'gender-focused' stance, the thesis places the experiences, opinions and needs of women at the centre of this study. This was regarded as important owing to the marginalisation and broader absence of women within previous studies on peer mentoring for prisoners, which have consistently neglected to consider women as a separate group from male offenders. This in turn has limited the understanding of whether this particular form of intervention can meet the distinct needs of women. This thesis has sought to make explicit the benefits of peer mentoring for women – which Buck and colleagues (2015) have previously identified as 'intangible or indirect' (p.159) – as well as seeking to offer a more in-depth explanation of how mentoring impacts women in relation to desistance. Also of interest was the significance of the mentor-mentee relationship, as well as, the challenges and limitations of this programme from the point of view of women involved; views and lived experiences that have rarely been recognised or explored.

The data generated in this study fulfils the two core aims of this thesis, firstly in directly addressing women's experiences of the conduct and practice of mentoring programmes – both as mentor and mentee - and secondly in contributing to our theoretical understanding of mentoring as it relates to women's experiences of desistance more broadly. This means the contribution of knowledge has been both to directly inform the empirical evidence-base on the use of mentoring in prisons and the community, and to develop desistance-focused theories to reflect the role played by *relationality* in women's experiences.

The thesis placed the following set of research questions at the centre of the enquiry in order to address these aims: firstly, how is mentoring, for women in prison and on release in the community, organised and conducted? What are the underlying principles of the mentoring practice that influence the approach? Secondly, in relation to the type of relationship that develops between the mentor and the mentee, the study looked to answer the following research questions; what are the perceived impacts of the mentoring relationship? How is this relationship understood and described by both mentor and mentee? Is a 'growth fostering' relationship capable of developing? Finally, the research sought to highlight the perceived outcomes and possible benefits for women being mentored in a criminal justice context, seeking to answer the following key questions; can mentoring be regarded as being able to meet female criminogenic needs, and how? And, what are the potential challenges or limitations of mentoring programmes, both within a penal setting and the community?

Within this chapter, each of these research questions is examined in turn, giving an overview of the key findings as determined from each area of focus. It then moves on to discuss the contribution that this thesis has made to the literature around 'what works' (as well as considering 'when', and 'for whom') with women and female desistance by examining two key emerging themes from the research data; *mentoring identities and power relations*. The limitations to the study and subsequent directions for future research are also explored. And finally, recommendations are suggested for present and prospective mentoring interventions for women, as well as situating the research within the scope of current policy and practice for female offenders.

8.1. Key findings

8.1.1. Mentoring for women in practice: Impact on mentors and mentees

When discussing the practice of mentoring, this thesis was concerned with furthering an understanding of how a mentoring session is constructed and how they are organised and managed, within a penal context particularly, considering

the multitude of definitions of what defined an activity as 'mentoring'. The women at HMP/YOI Bronzefield interviewed for the study took part in a peer mentoring programme, which was based either on the recovery wing of house block 1 or in the classrooms in the education area of the prison. For the mentees within the recovery unit, involvement in the mentoring programme was rarely voluntary; more commonly it was a mandatory requirement of their sentence plan, with the majority of respondents stating this was their primary motivation for being mentored. This suggested there were parallels to be drawn between the ways in which mentoring was run in the prison and traditional drug recovery programmes, utilising 'mentoring' as a pseudo-sponsor role more commonly found within the field of support within recovery from substance (mis) use (specifically 12-Step programmes such as Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous). For the mentees within the drug recovery unit in particular, having a mentor to talk to about the difficulties of prison life, and someone who understood 'what you were going through' (particularly in respect of remaining drug-free whilst in prison and dealing with substance cravings and triggers) was regarded as the most significant benefit of having a peer mentor. The ability for peer mentors to be able to personally relate to an experience is what enabled them to be 'quality mentors' by the mentees' standards. One mentee described her mentor as being like a '*safety net*', helping to steer her away from negative behaviours conceptualised as 'risk taking' (within the specific context of recovery/potential relapse), and instead helping the women to feel empowered and to establish long-term goals for their future. Boyce *et al* (2009) have previously highlighted the significance of the 'peer' element of support specifically, stating that the combination of personal experience and having the capability to 'inspire and give hope' to the mentee is one of the uniquely beneficial aspects peer-based mentoring programmes (Boyce *et al*, 2009: 19). This suggests that the peer model that made up the majority of 'mentoring' in Bronzefield may therefore have represented a more valuable model than those non-peer programmes explored in the community. For women in the education area of the prison specifically, mentors were used to offer extra practical support and to inspire confidence with learning, and were regarded as being more able to engage successfully with the women than other forms of professional support.

Returning to the initial research question around the perceived impact of mentoring programmes, one of the most significant findings from the research was the effect that mentoring was perceived to have on the peer mentor specifically. Although the benefits of peer mentoring for both parties has been discussed previously (e.g. Fletcher and Batty, 2012; Jolliffe and Farrington, 2008), the findings from the current study indicate that those in the role of 'peer mentor' *benefited more directly than the women who were being mentored*. Peer mentors described having been given a purpose through peer mentoring, and were able to contribute in a positive, meaningful way to someone else's life during a difficult period, which correlates Maruna's (2001) recognition of the positive impact opportunities for 'generative' action on pathways to desistance. The benefits of the creation of these kinds of positive connections were seen to enhance the degree of social capital that peer mentors were able to achieve from these connections, which is regarded as a significant prerequisite of the desistance process (cf. Buck *et al*, 2015; Corcoran, 2012; McNeill and Weaver, 2010).

Peer mentors also talked about adjusting their own behaviour by conforming to prison rules and regulations, as they felt they were in a *role model* position. In this way, the peer mentor was seen adopting the identity of both 'model prisoner' and 'professional ex', both of which were seen to be valuable to mentees in terms of inspiring change and guiding behaviour (this is discussed further below in Section 8.1.3). Throughout the interview process, peer mentors were observed as being proud of their role and talked at length about the fulfilling nature of peer mentoring. The research was therefore able to meet the intended aim of generating further understanding of how mentoring programmes benefited both the mentors and mentees within a penal setting.

Whilst there has been recognition of the limitations and challenges of peer mentoring (Buck, 2013; Colley, 2001), this study offered a new insight into problems of possible re-traumatisation and exploitation. From an evaluative approach, the training and management of the mentoring programmes within

the prison lacked consideration of the potential for further harm that peer mentoring can have within this setting. Peer mentors in general were offered little guidance or official training before undertaking their role, and expressed the need for greater help and support by operational staff. Due to the vulnerable nature of both mentors and mentees, failure to sufficiently manage the mentoring programme was described as having significant, detrimental effects on the women involved. For peer mentors working with mentees in the drug recovery area, issues of coping with hearing stories of addiction and recovery – similar to that of their own lived experience – represented one of the most negative impacts of the mentoring role. The dangers of essentially re-living different stages of recovery were also magnified by the fact that there was limited training or coping mechanisms to aid mentors in dealing with the more emotionally overwhelming aspects of the mentoring role. Recovery programmes in prison that are able to target trauma specifically are becoming more commonly recognised as an essential component of any prison-based intervention (Moloney *et al,* 2009). Following the results of this research, it is argued that this recognition of trauma is also crucial in the formation of peer mentoring programmes for women.

There were distinct issues with the way in which mentoring was conducted within the prison. Mentees described feelings of distrust towards peer mentors in terms of upholding confidentiality and sharing information about mentees with fellow peer mentors. Perceptions of favouritism and preferential treatment of peer mentors by staff also generated unease and negativity about the way in which 'mentoring' operated in the prison. Peer mentors' enhanced freedom of movement, and the attendant consequences of risk-taking and rule breaking were also identified by some mentees as a negative aspect of the way mentoring operated at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, highlighting the potential for problematic behaviour if mentoring programmes are not sufficiently managed. While the potential problems with mentoring programmes have been previously pointed out in earlier studies, the elements of bullying behaviour and infractions relating to the use of the peer mentor role (and its associated freedoms) in drug-dealing

and meeting one's intimate needs and desires has remained curiously absent from such work.

Due to the importance of through-care from prison to the community, women's experience of mentoring programmes outside of the prison – most often through women's centres and criminal justice organisations - was also significant. The interviews with the community mentors also had the same goal of gaining an understanding of how mentoring practices were carried out, and how this was undertaken in comparison to peer mentors in prison. The similarities between these programmes were surprising given the distinct environment where each was located. As with the prison-based peer mentoring programmes, community mentors discussed the use of 'signposting' and 'creating goals' and targets as a means to offer practical support to the women released from prison. The value of just having 'someone to talk to', who could offer non-judgmental advice and provide encouragement and support, was regarded as fulfilling for the more emotion-focused (or 'non-criminogenic') needs that are so significant for women in terms of aiding reintegration post-release. However, an unanticipated similarity between the prison-based programmes and the community-based mentoring projects was that elements of training and support also appeared to be insufficient. Training programmes and an understanding of what is involved in mentoring ex-prisoners was understood differently between organisations, highlighting potential problems of varying degrees of support; respondents were of the opinion that, consequently, this impacted negatively on the potential efficacy of mentoring programmes in the community. Further problems were found within measures of 'successes' in the community, which relied heavily on mentees achieving tangible targets and meeting required goals. Therefore, despite the benefits and positive outcomes of the programme, there is still a question as to whether mentoring is able to provide *sustained* independence and positive change. This limitation is discussed in greater detail further on in this chapter in relation to where mentoring is situated within current policy.

8.1.2. The mentoring relationship

In conjunction with gaining a greater understanding of the way in which mentoring programmes impact and influence female offenders, this thesis aimed to explore the mentoring relationship and how this was experienced by women in the penal settings. As a considerable body of research has previously indicated that female relationships are predominantly related to familial and 'kinship' roles, this study was interested to see whether this could describe the kind of dynamic between mentors and mentees. While women did indeed conceptualise their mentoring relationship within a familial framework, it was predominantly the mentors rather than the mentees who related to other women in these roles. Peer mentors in HMP/YOI Bronzefield tended to position themselves within a kinship role which, hierarchically, would place them in a more powerful position over their mentees, with many describing the role of 'mother', 'aunt' or 'grandmother'. This highlights the way in which peer mentors viewed their relationship towards mentees in an almost parental fashion and discussed feeling maternal and protective towards their mentees. This also linked back to the concept of 'generativity by fulfilment' (Maruna, 2001: 119), where mentors were able to feel a sense of purpose in their role by guiding mentees away from making similar decisions (with negative consequences) that they too had previously made. However, it also implied an unequal power relationship, and was distinct from the more equal/horizontal kinship terminology employed by mentees to describe the mentoring relationship, such as 'friend'. This indicates that despite the intention of mentoring peer programmes to remove the level of authority and inherent control associated with more professional services, such as those provided by probation or prison staff, it is impossible to refute the existence of this power imbalance entirely.

For community mentors, this concept of enacting maternal relationships was also evident throughout the interviews. The mentors discussed feeling like a replacement parental figure for younger mentees, as well as actively 'role modelling'' the development of a 'reciprocal, significant relationship' as the core principle of mentoring, the degree to which this was attainable in reality was

shaped by context-specific barriers to the relationship. For both peer mentors and community mentors, the notion of getting 'too close' was touched upon by all women interviewed as something to avoid. The length of a woman's sentence in particular was seen as a crucial factor in the development of a relationship, with mentors claiming not to want to become too close to women on shorter sentences. The pain of separation or rejection after building a close bond with someone is something that most women preferred to avoid if at all possible, knowing that many in-prison bonds rarely survive after the release of one party in the relationship. Due to the political climate in which the research took place, with the closure of HMP Holloway imminent but yet to happen, many women in the prison commented on the instability and uncertainty they felt not knowing how the closure of the prison would impact on them.

Peer mentors also disclosed feeling uncomfortable with the idea of developing a close relationship *at all* for fear of being over-relied upon or put in compromising positions by being asked to 'break the rules'. This was an interesting perception, given that mentees *also* discussed the potential dangers of such relationships: however, they indicated that it was ment*ees* rather than ment*ors* who were more likely to be taken advantage of in this way (for example, the mentee discussed in Chapter Seven who was herself penalised over a mentor's illegal drug use). What is clearly evident is that the very nature of a 'successful' mentoring relationship – which Barry (2007) indicated must be reciprocal and significant if it is to achieve maximum efficacy in supporting the intended parties – posed multiple dangers for women in penal environments in particular.

8.1.3. Mentoring and identity; facilitating the changing self

Throughout the interviews, perceptions of, and shifts in, notions of (self) identity were established as a significant element of the mentoring experience, for both the mentor and mentee, and repeatedly linked to discussions about (broadly) desistance. In relation to identity theory and desistance, Paternoster and Bushway (2009) discuss the latter as occurring when individuals become

dissatisfied with their current lifestyles, and offending behaviour, and it is this 'crystallisation of discontent' that subsequently creates the initial move towards a 'possible self as a non-offender' (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009: 1105). This idea of a changing self was identified by the women as a possible outcome of the mentoring intervention. For peer mentors in the prison-based programme, their identity was strongly connected to their role; for women who had substance misuse problems, their role as the 'professional ex' meant that the support they were able to offer their mentee was seen to be more genuine and meaningful as it was drawn on parallel past experiences. This finding reflects the shift from 'addict' to 'non-addict' identities as recognised by McIntosh and McKeaganey (2000). The identity of the peer mentor – as role model and 'professional ex' – was also seen as significant in terms of guiding the mentees behaviour, particularly for those women in the recovery unit. Mentees in the prison distinguished peer mentors from other women in prison by the fact that peer mentors were 'successful' and offered the model of a positive, substance-free identity that mentees could work towards themselves. More than this, however, the 'peer' identity was also felt to be a realistic reflection of what was achievable for the mentee as a fellow woman in prison with similar life experiences. To mentees, peer mentors represented what they could potentially – and realistically - achieve whilst in prison and hope to achieve upon release. In terms of the female prisoner's sense of self, mentoring offered a means of guiding the women towards an identity focused towards the future; of a 'future-orientated self' that dictates the kind of person the individual wants to become (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009: 1113). An intervention such as peer mentoring taking place within prison is therefore significant due to outside influences, rather than agency alone, in conceiving of new decisions and behaviours. The inherent decision by the mentees to adjust their behaviour and actively seek positive changes in this respect - a key element of desistance in action (Giordano et al, 2002; McNeill and Weaver, 2010) – is therefore indicative of the desistance potential of penal mentoring programmes.

The peer mentors within the study were also observed as being aware of this role model figure they were seen to represent and this subsequently influenced

their own behaviour and understanding of their sense of self. Living up to the role model identity encouraged women to 'go straight' (cf. Maruna, 2001) while in prison, and peer mentors discussed working hard to uphold the respect and favour of their mentees, fellow prisoners and the prison staff. As discussed within the findings, peer mentors commented on the position as influential in their decisions to 'keep their [own] behaviour in check', from shunning criminal activity in prison to their avoidance of using bad language. In this way, the role of the peer mentor could be seen as a 'hook for change' (Giordano *et al,* 2002; 1001), or an opportunity to encourage their behaviour to be different. According to Giordano and colleagues, exposure to these kinds of opportunities can lead to a turning point where the mentor can envisage themselves in a more pro-social identity.

While the desistance journey could be considered complete once previous deviant behaviours are no longer regarded to be important or desired (Giordano *et al*, 2002; McNeill *et al*, 2012), McNeill and Weaver (2010) highlight this difficulty in achieving full and permanent abstinence from offending, suggesting it is a 'process' rather than an 'event'; 'a process of 'to-ing' and 'fro-ing', of progress and setback, of hope and despair' (McNeill and Weaver, 2010). Within the context of the mentoring explored during the current study, 'successful' desistance among women in prison can only be measured in so far as to say the individual is open to the concept of change, ready for the change to occur, and facilitates this change through their behaviour and their altered opinion of criminality. Both peer mentors and mentees within this study expressed a desire to avoid criminal activity, achieve sobriety, and work towards the development of a positive, crime-free identity. Peer mentors discussed how mentoring had not only changed their behaviour for the better, it had also made them realise the impact of their criminal behaviour and subsequently made them committed to the idea of positive change. Once again, McNeill and Weaver (2010) state that desistance is less about the factors that are inherent to the process, such as social bonds, life events or narrative changes, and more to do with the meaning and significance attached to these developments and whether this is great enough for individuals to change their behaviours on an indefinite basis (McNeill and

Weaver, 2010). While this study was unable to ascertain the impact of mentoring programmes in this respect in the long-term, it did appear to be the case that acting as a peer mentor in particular offered a means by which self-change could be 'legitimised', which Rumgay (2004) identifies as being vital to the process of desistance.

Community mentors also facilitated self-change among their mentees through acting as a pro-social 'role model' – someone mentees could respect and look up to - and mentors explained that mentees felt that they did not want to let their mentor down and wanted to demonstrate that they could positively change. This need to live up to the goals set by the mentors was successful in helping to shape mentee behaviour and help mentees to envision a desired future. Along with goal setting, community mentors also described the use of role modelling as the way in which they helped to guide their mentees' behaviour. Previous research on the use of mentoring has also reinforced its significance in terms of being a behavioural learning strategy through its use of role and behaviour modelling as well as the re-enforcement of these different, affirmative behaviours (Salgado *et al*, 2010).

Peer mentors also used their mentoring role to distance themselves from the inherently negative identity of 'prisoner'. One woman in the study described her role as peer mentor as elevating her above the common prisoner, to a position somewhere 'in between' a staff member and a prisoner, whilst another peer mentor commented on being 'more than' a prisoner during research interviews, indicating their attempts to assume another identity through their role. Describing their position in the prison in this way was also indicative of the inherent authority they associated with a role of peer mentor, aligning themselves more closely to the role of staff member than fellow prisoner. This idea was particularly present amongst peer mentors who worked in the education wing. Mentors would often affiliate their role with that of 'teacher' and discussed being left in charge of the other women in the classroom in the teacher's absence. As discussed within Chapter Four in greater detail, peer mentors subsequently understood this role as valuable and important and were

proud of the higher status and 'more than' identity that being a peer mentor afforded them.

In this sense, the benefits of the peer mentoring role as it relates to self-change can be understood in relation to the concept of the 'possible self' which, as explained by Knox (2006), is seen as a representing an identity that an individual aspires to, but can also describe the 'feared' self that is to be avoided (p.61). The possible self also serves the function of motivating individuals towards a 'personally defined' goal (Knox, 2006: 61), such as avoiding recidivism or sobriety, which was frequently the case for women in this study. In this sense, peer mentoring could be regarded as providing women with an 'opportunity for reform' (Rumgay, 2004: 407) that is both meaningful and manageable. Rumgay's (2004) explanation of this opportunity for reform is reflected in the role that prison-based peer mentors are seen to play;

> 'Not only, therefore, must the opportunity be *available* in the offenders environment, but the offender must *recognise* it as such, perceive it to be *accessible*… and value it as a desirable alternative to her present condition' (Rumgay, 2004: 408).

The development of identity and the conception of the self can also be seen as structured by gendered norms (Knox, 2006; Ogilvie and Clark, 1992). This idea was regarded as significant to the study due to its specific focus on exploring mentoring programmes for women in a criminal justice context. Knox (2006) suggests that, in relation to the idea of identity formation, women are more likely to integrate perceptions of others in relation to their formation of a new, possible self as well as in defining their self-worth (Knox, 2006). This construction of the self for women is also seen to be dependent on the degree of emotional connections and social bonds to others (Knox, 2006), and is also a key requirement for the desistance process (Farrall, 2004; Weaver and McNeill, 2011), which subsequently informed the studies focus on exploring the significance of the mentoring relationship. Much of the previous literature on relationships and women in prison has been predominantly focused on the re-

enactment of 'natural' gendered roles (i.e. through the creation of 'pseudo-families') in order to replicate accepted identities outside of a prison environment (Collica, 2010; Reisig *et al*, 2002). Following the research interviews it was seen that these 'social scripts' (Rumgay, 2004: 409) of familial roles were re-enacted – but only to some extent - by women in prison through the mentoring relationship. As discussed previously, some peer mentors likened their relationship with mentees to a mothering or parental relationship, describing how they would 'tell off' the mentees like a parent would and felt maternal towards them. In this way peer mentors were seen to be re-enacting familiar social scripts of a mothering identity (despite this being seen as potentially problematic to the relationship). However, this was by no means the dominant relational 'social script' for women in the study, who also described mentoring as equal kin partnerships (e.g. mentors as 'friend') and where the familial connotations of the mentoring role extended to non-peer community-based mentors. Critiquing such a standard, one-dimensional focus on women's identity in prison as solely made up of 'gender normative' roles of mother or carer – or as a 'lover' (Pardue, Arrigo and Murphy, 2011) – it is important in trying to make sense of these relationships in a manner that moves beyond standard tropes of the 'need' for women in prisons to recreate a 'family', or perish. The data serves to refute some of the accepted ideas about gender as defined by societal terms and understandings, moving away from the classical criminological conceptions of a multitude of gendered assumptions about the 'natural' behaviour of women.

8. 1. 4. Mentoring and power dynamics

For Ragins (1997), power is a 'dyadic and reciprocal process in interpersonal relationships', and is therefore an inherent factor of any relationship (p. 484), by extension; this includes mentoring relationships of the sort examined here. All groups could therefore be distinguished by the concept of changing power relationships and it is this difference that informs the basis for 'social stratification', within a prison setting in particular, these elements of power and control are even more evident (Ragins, 1997: 485). While previous research has

looked at power dynamics within mentoring relationships, a focus on peer mentoring relationships specifically is less developed, and even less so in relation to female peer mentoring relationships in criminal justice settings (Colley, 2001). Following analysis of the interview data, the theme of inherent power dynamics emerged when discussing the nature of the peer mentors' role in the prison, as well as the role of mentors in the community. This was of particular interest given that peer mentoring programmes were developed with the intention of offering a more equal intervention than previous forms of support programmes, which have frequently been created and run by those in a position of authority (and often individuals with different social circumstances and life histories) over the mentee. However, this study highlighted that far from this ideal concept, these power dynamics may actually be replicated through the peer mentoring role in prisons and that elements of hierarchy become unavoidable despite the intention for a programme to be centred on the development of an equal, reciprocal relationship.

During the interviews it was commented on that peer mentors in the prison were able to hold a degree of hierarchy and control over other women because of their position. As discussed in relation to identity above, peer mentors perceived themselves as being 'more than' a prisoner and subsequently maintained that a separate set of boundaries applied to them. Mentees perceived that peer mentors were also able to influence which other women in the prison were given similar positions, mentors were also regarded as being able to convert their apparent positions of privilege into the power to avoid being penalised for behaviour such as moving drugs through the prison as well as being allowed to share a room with intimate partners, a rule that was apparently *only* overlooked for peer mentors. Peer mentors again hinted at this idea of an unspoken hierarchy, stating that staff members had greater trust in them and their capabilities in comparison to other prisoners, reaffirming the notion that peer mentors appeared to receive preferential treatment. When questioning peer mentors about whether they believed this to be true, it was disregarded as simply comments by other women who were 'jealous' of their position and was not seen as detrimental to the effectiveness of using mentoring within the prison. This

finding seems to confirm Colley's (2001) statement that 'the problem of power in mentoring is a problem for the mentee' (Colley, 2001: 4).

Amongst the mentors in the community, a greater awareness of inherent power dynamics was seen due to the mentors' position within society and the level of vulnerability of the women they mentored. Despite their awareness of these intrinsic hierarchies however, the very nature of the way in which mentoring was orchestrated can be argued as reinforcing these power imbalances. Buck (2013) puts forward the idea that mentors inherently have a level of control over mentees through their ability to determine what goals are set, what action is seen as sufficient in meeting said goals, and their position of power in leading an individual mentee's direction of change. Colley (2001) comments that whilst previous studies have analysed the notion of power dynamics within a relationship, there has been little focus on the wider power relations in which relationships are located. For the women in prison, clear notions of power dynamics are evident in all aspects of the way in which the penal environment is constructed. In relation to mentoring therefore, Gay and Stepheson (1998) discuss the impact of externally imposed institutional targets, which direct and dictate the way in which the mentoring programme is carried out. In this sense there is a question as to whether any form of relationship that is mutual and free from elements of hierarchy – particularly in respect of mentoring in prison- can truly be constructed.

8.2 Limitations of the study

It is important to recognise that there are some limitations to this study and to acknowledge these limits in relation to the research findings. As discussed within the Methodology Chapter, the peer mentor findings discussed represent only a small cohort of peer mentors within one female prison in England and as such cannot be generalised as universal practices of peer mentoring. Only a small number of women were spoken to during interviews and subsequently it is difficult to determine any fixed patterns in terms of the impacts of peer mentoring. Another limitation in relation to research participants was the lower

number of mentees spoken to in comparison to peer mentors and community mentors, as this would have allowed for a broader insight into how mentoring is received and understood.

Attempts to recruit a larger number of participants was also a difficult aspect of the field work, as the mentees also often presented as being the more vulnerable or volatile cohort of prisoners, and were subsequently not always as willing to participate. For those that did partake in the research, the resulting data is slightly less 'data rich' than the peer mentors. The majority of participants interviewed were also identified as relevant for the study by institutional gatekeepers, and consequently may have presented a more positive depiction of peer mentoring than what was actually in practice. As well as this possible bias, the recognition of researcher influence can also be regarded as leading participant responses. Although sufficient steps were taken to limit the inherent power dynamics between my status as researcher and the women being interviewed, the influence of the research is often unavoidable and could also subsequently alter the way in which women decided to answer the interview questions. Due to these limitations in sampling, future research across several prison sites may have yielded a more dynamic and informative overview of mentoring for women as a whole. However despite these drawbacks to the study, the information presented through the findings is able to provide original empirical research offering a snapshot of experiences of peer mentoring programmes and the perceived outcomes and impacts.

8. 3 Recommendations - for future research and policy

There is already a popular consensus that in terms of 'what works' best for women is the provision of support to help manage life in prison as well as reintegration and release back into the community (Buck *et al,* 2015). It was significant to focus on women's experiences of mentoring both in prison and the community due to the importance of social connections and positive networks, and to highlight the need for support throughout the journey of a female

offender. This research felt particularly relevant for policy directives in light of the movement towards more joined up prison and probation services. Central to this move is the concept of a focus on 'offender management' throughout the criminal justice system, with rehabilitation strategies beginning in prison and continuing in partnership with third sector organisations on release (Reform, 2012).

The research was undertaken during a period of much contention for rehabilitation policies with the development of the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda. Despite its attempt to revolutionise the provision of services (NOMS, 2013), its impact on the women's centres is significant. During the time the research was taking place, the future of one of the research sites, the Brighton Women's Centre, was uncertain due to the funding stipulations set out by the Payment by Results (PbR) scheme. Under the use of PbR programmes, service providers are funded based on outcomes achieved, introducing a substantial financial risk and limitations to service design (Sheil and Beridenbach-Roe, 2014). The development of PbR is essentially inappropriate for addressing the interests of female offenders with enforced monitoring and regulated targets, as Gelsthorpe and Hedderman (2012) state: 'The level of demand in terms of sheer numbers is too small, and the complexity of women's needs is too great, to make this an area for easy or quick profit' (Gelsthorpe and Hedderman, 2012: 387). In relation to mentoring specifically, the PbR scheme creates further difficulties for a service that is already hard to measure in terms of tangible outcomes. For the majority of women the most significant element of mentoring programmes is their ability to provide a form of connection and emotional support, which are less likely to be recognised under this new rehabilitation agenda and subsequently fail to acknowledge the impact mentoring can have.

In reference to the aforementioned literature around women's criminogenic needs, this study examined whether the perceived outcomes of these mentoring programmes could specifically target these distinct requirements. Despite the growth of mentoring, it is still a comparatively under-researched phenomenon in relation to other forms of rehabilitation intervention, particularly for women,

and notably in terms of the perceived benefits of mentoring within a prison setting and the differences between peer and non-peer programmes, with most studies specifically focusing on one or the other and in the majority of cases in relation to men.

The data gathered from this study outlines the basis for a requirement for a more robust evaluation of the longer term effects and impacts of peer mentoring and community mentoring programmes for women. In terms of prison-based peer mentoring, this study highlighted a number of benefits of using peer mentoring programmes in this setting, however in terms of a future evaluation it could be beneficial to incorporate the use of quantitative survey data alongside the qualitative data in order to gain greater insight into the total numbers of women participating in peer mentoring schemes in the prison, both mentor and mentee, along with their perceived impact of the programme. In relation to gaining a greater understanding of the use of mentoring in the community on release from prison, there is a need to collect the views of those women who have been mentored from a range of different community intervention programmes. For this evaluation the use of a longitudinal study may be beneficial, consisting of interviews with women recently released from prison and those who are six to twelve months on from their work with a mentor. This would effectively indicate how mentoring is positioned to meet the needs of women leaving prison as well as demonstrate whether mentoring can directly influence efforts to desist from criminal behaviour in the long term.

The findings from the study suggest that there are still considerable modifications required to the way in which mentoring programmes are developed and implemented in the community and prison in order for their full potential to be realised. Taking into account the outcomes of the study, the following recommendations for future mentoring practice are put forward. Although one of the key proposals of the study is a more 'joined up' effort to mentoring between the community sector and prison-based programmes, this chapter considers recommendations for each in turn, looking first at the recommendations of practice direction for prion-based programmes:

1. *Clearer information about the use of peer mentoring programmes is to be disseminated more widely across the prison:*

This was thought to be a significant issue when attempting to interview mentees within the prison, as some women stated they either had no mentor (despite the prison staff confirming otherwise) or did not know of any mentoring programme that was used (rending this data inadequate for the study and subsequently eliminating the individual from the cohort of responses). It was felt that more informative and widely circulated material about peer mentoring would be useful at increasing the number of women who would want to partake in the programme and could potentially benefit from peer mentoring. This could also be significant in providing the women with a degree of agency over their decision to make constructive changes whilst incarcerated, which is inherent to principles of desistance that emphasise the requirement of a readiness and willingness to change in order to work towards a reformed identity (McNeil, 2012).

2. *More robust training and support programmes, taking into account the need for 'trauma-informed' practice:*

Despite the prison attempting to incorporate a more structured programme for the use of peer mentors, the data suggested that many women were working in the role of peer mentor despite little guidance or direction from trained staff. The need of more enhanced and wide-ranging training is therefore required in order for mentoring to be delivered effectively and safely. Previous evaluations of rehabilitation programmes for women have outlined the need for more enhanced, trauma-informed care provisions in order for women in prison to be supported more effectively (Miller and Najavits, 2012). Miller and Najavits (2012) stress the importance of staff awareness of the impacts of trauma and the importance of a 'do no harm' approach in order to avoid actions that may 're-enact traumatic dynamics' (p.2). Following the outcomes of this research, it is suggested further training is provided in relation to:

- Trauma-informed approaches to working with women in prison, as well training around the possibility and impact of re-traumatisation for those working as peer-mentors

- More specialised training measures for peer mentors focusing on the management of sensitive information, the limitations and measures of their position as mentors, and support strategies and coping mechanisms for dealing with distressing information. This is also important with regards to offering training around more substantial support for peer ment*ors* specifically, in order to limit the degree of re-traumatisation that could be possible when working with women who have experienced similar past histories of abuse or substance misuse.

- A need for improved prison staff training in relation to developing a better understanding about the potential challenges and risks of this programme, in both a practical sense and in terms of managing the relationships between mentors and mentees. Staff training should also highlight the potential misconceptions of power and authority that can be present within the peer mentoring role and how this could be addressed.

As a result of the research study, the data is able to inform staff understanding of the potential impact of prisoner-staff relationships, specifically in relation to the level of trust and issues of 'favouritism' amongst prisoners that can directly influence perceptions of authority and elements of division between the women. The successful management of the relationship between peer mentor and mentee is therefore also dependent on the degree of appropriate supervision and management of the programme by members of staff.

These recommendations are also directly relevant to those community organisations offering mentoring services to women in the criminal justice system, due to issues of informal and inadequate official training as well as casual recruitment processes.

3. *A direct link between mentoring services in the community and prison-based services:*

Arguably one of the most significant recommendations following this study is the need for mentoring interventions that are joined up with community organisations, creating a more robust 'continuation of care' from prison, through the gate, and back into the community. This is recognised as a key element of gender-responsive services for women in prison and on release (Covington and Bloom, 2006). It is suggested that a knowledge share between community and prison-based programmes could allow for a more streamlined service delivery and enhance the provision of service for mentees. Although there are a number of third sector organisations that currently deliver different types of in-prison services, mentoring included, one that provides a peer mentor both in prison and a community mentor on release, is yet to be developed.

The overarching conclusion that this thesis sought to determine was whether the question of 'what works for women' could be answered by the use of mentoring. The findings of the study indicate a continued need to implement gender-responsive principles that address female-specific explanations for offending behaviour and subsequently recommend the use of interventions designed specifically for women (Martin, Kautt and Gelsthorpe, 2009). The importance of women in the criminal justice system being recognised as a distinct group in their own right is continuously reiterated, as Gelsthorpe (2006) states: 'We've said it before, but we seem to have to say it again, and again, and again', in order for women's needs to be sufficiently recognised (p.4). Data from the study suggests that, despite the lack of succinct definition and potential problems with delivery, mentoring as a form of women-specific intervention can be best placed to sufficiently manage the distinct level of needs for women in the criminal justice system and support successful reintegration back into the community.

Bibliography:

Aitken, J. (2014) *Meaningful Mentoring.* The Centre for Social Justice: London.

Allan, G. (1998) 'Friendship, Sociology and Social Structure'. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.* 15(5): 685-702.

Allen, K. (1989) *Single Women Family Ties: Life Histories Of Older Women.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Anderson, E., M. and Shannon, A., L. (1988). 'Towards a Conceptualisation of Mentoring' in *Journal of Teacher Education.* Vol. 39 (1)

Andrews, D. A., and Bonta, J. (2006). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (4th ed.). Newark, NJ: LexisNexis.

Annison, J., and Bayford, J. (2015). 'Corston and beyond' in Annison, J., Brayford, J. and Deering, J. (Eds.). *Women and Criminal Justice: From the Corston Report to Transforming Rehabilitation.* University of Bristol: Policy Press.

Annison, J., Brayford,J., and Deering, J. (2015). 'Transforming Rehabilitation: implications for women'. in Annison, J., Brayford, J. and Deering, J. (Eds.). *Women and Criminal Justice: From the Corston Report to Transforming Rehabilitation.* University of Bristol: Policy Press.

AVA and Agenda (2017) 'The core components of gender sensitive service for women experiencing multiple disadvantage: a review of the literature'. *Mapping the Maze.* London: AVA and Agenda.

Astay-Caneda, V., Busbee, M. and Fanning, M. (2011) *Social Learning Theory and Prison Work Release Programs.* USA: Florida International University

Backett-Milburn, K. and Wilson, S. (2000) 'Understanding peer education: insights from a process evaluation. *Health Education Research.* 15(1):85-96

Baez, B. (2002). "Confidentiality in qualitative research: Reflections on secrets, power and agency". *Qualitative Research.* vol.2 pp. 35-55

Bandura, A. (1991) 'Self-regulation of motivation through anticipatory and self-regulation mechanisms. In R. A. Dienstbier (ed.), Perspectives on motivation: Nebraska symposium on motivation. (Vol 38, 69-164). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press

Barry, M. (2007). 'Listening and learning: The reciprocal relationship between worker and client'. *The Journal of Community and Criminal Justice.* 54 (4). pp. 407-422

Belknap, J. (1996) *The Invisible woman: Gender, crime and justice.* Cincinnati: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Belknap, J. (2007) *The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime and Justice* (2nd ed). Cengage Learning: USA

Belknap, J. (2011) 'Working with Female Offenders: A Gender-Sensitive Approach'. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*- 35: 339

Blair, J. (2006) 'Self-discovered learning – peer tutoring at Blundeston prison'. *The Research and Development Bulletin.* 4(2); Parkin, S. and McKeganey, N. (2000) 'The rise and rise of peer education approaches'. *Drugs, Education, Prevention and Policy.* 7(3)

Blanchette, K. (2001) Classifying female offenders for effective intervention: Application of the case-based principles of risk and need. Comprehensive paper submitted in partial fulfilment of Ph.D. (Psychology), Carleton University

Blanchette, K. and Taylor, K. N. (2009) *Reintegration of Female Offenders: Perspectives on "What Works". http://www.aca.org/fileupload/177/ahaidar/Blanchette_Taylor.pdf* [accessed: 10/04/2014]

Bloom, B. and Covington, S. (2000) *Gendered Justice: Programming for women in correctional settings.* Paper presented to American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, CA.

Bloom, B., Owen, B. and Covington, S. (2002) *Gender-responsive strategies: Research, practice and guiding principles for women offenders.* Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.

Bloom, B., Owen, B. and Covington, S. (2004) "Women Offenders and the Gendered Effects of Public Policy" in *Review of Policy Research.* Vol 21(1): 31-48

Boudin, K. and Weinstein, C. (2011) 'Peer education in prison: A rights-based approach'. Bercochea, E., Weinstein, C. and Evans, D.P. (eds) *Rights-based approaches to public health.* London: Springer.

Bouffard, J. A. and Bergseth, K. J. (2008) "The impact of re-entry services on juvenile offenders recidivism" in *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice,* 6: 295-318

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998) *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development.* Sage: Cleveland

Boyce et al 2009

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006)"Using thematic analysis in psychology". *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3 (2). pp. 77-101

Broidy, L. M. and Cauffman, E. E. (2006) *Understanding the Female Offender.* US Department of Justice. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/216615.pdf [accessed 1/12/14]

Brown, M. and Ross, S. (2010) "Mentoring, Social Capital and Desistance: A Study of Women Released from Prison" in The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology, vol. 43(1).

Buck, G., Corcoran, M. and Worrall, A. (2015) 'Gendered dynamics of mentoring' in Annison, J., Brayford, J. and Deering, J. (Eds.) *Women and Criminal Justice. From*

the Corston Report to Transforming Rehabilitation. University of Bristol: Policy Press

Buck, G. (2016). '*Peer mentoring and the role of the voluntary sector in [re]producing 'desistance': identity, agency, values, change and power'*. PhD Thesis, Keele University. Accessed 10/06/2017 < http://eprints.keele.ac.uk/2410/1/BuckPhD2016.pdf>

Burman, E. (1990). "Differing with deconstruction: A feminist critique. In Parker, I. and Shotter, J. (eds.) *Deconstructing social psychology.* London: Routledge

Byrne, B. (2004). "Qualitative Interviewing" in C. Seale (ed) *Researching Society and Culture* (2nd ed.) London: Sage, 179-192

Byrne, C. F. and Trew, K. J. (2008) "Pathways Through Crime: The Development of Crime and Desistance in the Accounts of Men and Women Offenders". *The Howard Journal* vol. 47(3): 238-258

Calhoun, S., Messina, N., Cartier, J. and Torres, S. (2010) "Implementing Gender Responsive Treatment for Women in Prison: Client and Staff Perspectives" in *Federal Probation: A Journal of Correctional Philosophy and Practice*. Vol. 74(3): 1-10

Campbell, R., & Schram, P. J. (1995). "Feminist research methods: A content analysis of psychology and social science textbooks". *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 19, 85–106.

Carter, P (2001) *Review of PFI and Market Testing in the Prison Service*, London: Prison Service.

Chesney-Lind, M. and Shelden, R.G. (2004) *Girls, Delinquency, and Juvenile Justice.* Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

Cobbina, J. E. (2009) *From Prison to Home: Women's Pathways In and Out of Crime.* US Department of Justice

Cooke, J., McClure, S., Koutsenok, I., and Lord, S. (2008) The Implementation of Inmate Mentor Programmes in the Correctional Treatment System as an Innovative Approach. *Journal of Teaching in the Addictions.* 7(2): 123-132

Colley, H. (2001). 'Righting rewritings of the myth of Mentor: A critical perspective on career guidance mentoring'. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling.* 29(2): 177-198

Colley, H. (2003) 'Engagement mentoring for disaffected youth: a new model of mentoring for social inclusion' in *British Educational Research Journal.* 29 (4)

Collica-Cox, K (2016). 'Female Offenders, HIV Peer Programs, and Attachment: The Importance of Prison-Based Civilian Staff in Creating Opportunities to Cultivate Prosocial Behaviours'. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology.* pgs 1-27

Corston, J. (2007) *The Corston Report: a review of women with particular vulnerabilities*

in the criminal justice system. London: Home Office

Cotterill, P. (1992) "Interviewing Women. Issues of Friendship, Vulnerability, and Power" in *Women's Studies Int. Forum.* Vol.12 (5/6) 593-606

Covington, J. (1985) 'Gender differences in criminality among heroin users'. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquenc,-.* 22: pp. 329-353

Covington, S. (1998). 'Helping Women to Recover: Creating Gender-Specific Treatment for Substance-Abusing Women and Girls in Correctional Settings'. In McMahon, M (Ed.) *Assessment to Assistance: Programes for Women in Community Corrections.* Latham, Md: American Correctional Association. pp171- 233
http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/prison2home02/covington.htm

Covington, S. (2001). "A Woman's Journey Home: Challenges for Female Offenders and their Children" in *From Prison to Home: The Effect of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families and Communities.*

Covington, S. (2002) 'Helping Women Recover: Creating Gender-Responsive Treatment'. L. Straussner and S. Brown (eds.) *Handbook of Women's Addictions Treatment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Covington, S., and Bloom, B. (2006) *Gender Responsive Treatment and Services in Correctional Settings.* http://casat.unr.edu/docs/CovingtonandBloomGenderresponsivetreatmentandservicesincorrectionalsettings.pdf [accessed: 17/12/2013]

Daly, K. (1992). 'A women's pathway to felony court: Feminist theories of lawbreaking and problems of representation.' *Southern California Review of Law and Woman's Studies.* 11-52.

Daly, K. (1994) *Gender, Crime and Punishment.* New Haven: Yale University Press

Daly, K. and Chesney-Lind, M. (1988) Feminism an criminology. *Justice Quarterly,* 5(4) 497-535

Davies, P. (2000) "Doing Interviews with Female Offenders" in Jupp, V., Davies, P. and Francis, P (eds.) *Doing Criminological Research* (pp.82-96). London: Sage Publications

Davidson, L., Chinman, M. Sells, D., Rowe, M. (2006) 'Peer Support Among Adults With Serious Mental Illness: A Report From the Field'. *Schizophrenia Bulletin.* 32(3: pp. 443-450

DeCou, K. and Van Wright, S. (2002) "A Gender- Specific Intervention Model for Incarcerated Women: Women's V.O.I.C.E.S" in G. Landsberg, M. Rock, L. K. W. Berg and A. Smiley (eds.) *Serving Mentally Ill Offenders: Challenges and Opportunities for Mental Health Professionals*. Springer Publishing Company, Inc. : New York.

Denscombe, M., (2014) *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects*, (4th ed.). Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education (UK)

Denzin, N. (ed) (1970) *Sociological methods: A source book,* London: Butterworth

DeShong, H. A. F. (2013) "Feminist Reflexive Interviewing: Researching Violence against Women in St. Vincent and the Grenadines" in Kempadoo, K., DeShong, H. A. F., and Crawford, C. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies.* (no.7): 1-24

Devault, M. L. (1990) 'Talking and listening from women's standpoint: Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis'. P. Atkinson and S. Delamont (eds.) *SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods: Narrative methods. (*Vol.4, pp. 247-247). London: SAGE Publications Ltd

Devilly, G. J., Sorbello, L., Eccleston, L. and Ward, T. (2005) 'Prison-based peer-education schemes'. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour.* 10, pp. 219-240

Dhaliwal, R. and Harrower, J. (2209) Reducing prisoner vulnerability and providing a means of empowerment: evaluating the impact of a listener scheme on the listeners. *British Journal of Forensic Practice,* 11(3): 35-43

Dixon, A., and Jones, E. (2013). *Learning for Women in Prison: Report on the role of learning and skills in responding positively to the issues and circumstances faced by women in prison.* England: The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

Donati, P. (2011) *Relational Sociology: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences.* Routledge.

Dougherty, J. (1998). 'Power belief theory: Female criminality and the dynamics of oppression.' In R. Zeplin (ed.) *Female crime and delinquency: Critical perspectives and effective interventions.* pp.133-163. Gaithersbury, MD: Aspen Publishers

DuBois, D. L., and Karcher, M.A. (2005) (eds.) *Handbook of youth mentoring.* Sage, Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage.

Duelli Kelin, R. (1983) "How to do what we want to do: Thoughts about feminist methodology" in G. Bowles and R. Duelli Klein (eds.), *Theories of women's studies.* (105-116*)* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Earle, R. (2014). "Insider and Out: Making Sense of a Prison Experience and a Research Experience" in *Qualitative Enquiry,* 20:pp:429-430

Easton, H. and Matthews, R. (2011) *Evaluation of the Inspire Women's Project.* http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/foi/foi_publication_scheme_page/inspire_women_s_project_evaluation_report.pdf [accessed: 20/04/2014]

Eby, L.T., Allen, T. D., Evans, S. C, Thomas, Ng., DuBois, D., L. (2008) 'Does mentoring matter? A multidisciplinary meta-analysis comparing mentored and non-mentored individuals.' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour.* Vol.72 (2): 254-267

Farganis, J. (1993). *Readings in Social Theory: the Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism.* McGraw-Hill: New York.

Farrall, S. (2002). *Rethinking What Works with Offenders: Probation, Social Context and Desistance from Crime.* Cullompton: Willan.

Farrall, S. (2004). 'Social capital and offender reintegration: making probation desistance focused' in Maruna, S. and Immarigeon, R. (Eds.) *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration.* Devon: Willan Publishing

Farrall, S., Sharpe, G., Hunter, B. and Calverley, A. (2011). "Theorising structural and individual-level processes in desistance and persistence: Outlining an integrated perspective" in *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*. 44:pp.218 –234

Farrant, F. and Levenson, J. (2002) *Barred Citizens: Volunteering and Active Citizenship by Prisoners.* London: Prison Reform Trust

Finlay, L. (2002). ""Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. In *Qualitative Health Researcher,* 12(4), 531-545

Fletcher, D. R., and Batty, E. (2012). *Offender Peer Interventions: What do we know?* Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research. Sheffield Hallam University.

Forsyth, C. J., and Evans, R., D. (2003). 'Reconsidering the Pseudo-Family/Gang Gender Distinction in Prison Research. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology.* Vol.18 (1). pp.15-23

Foster, J. (2002) *Peer support in prison health care. An investigation into the Listening scheme in one adult male prison.* Greenwich, School of Health and Social Care, University of Greenwich

Fletcher, J. K. and Ragins, B. (2008) 'Stone Center Relational Cultural Theory: 'A Window on Relational Mentoring.' B. R. Ragins and K. E. Kram (eds) *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research and Practice.* (pp. 371-401). London: SAGE

Fusch, P. I., and Ness, L.R., (2015) 'Are We There Yet? Data Saturation in Qualitative Research', *The Qualitative Report,* (20) no.8: pp.

Ganong, L. and Coleman, M. (2014) "Qualitative research on family relationships" in *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships,* vol. 31(4): pp. 451-459

Garvey, B., Stokes, P. and Megginson, D. (2009) *Coaching and Mentoring: Theory and Practice.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Gelsthorpe, L. (1993) 'Approaching the topic of racism: Transferable research strategies?' D. Cook and B. Hudson (eds) *Racism and criminology* .pp.77-95. London: Sage.

Gelsthorpe, L. (2007) "Sentencing and Gender" in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter, *Working with Women Offenders in the Community.* (p. 40-60). Willan Publishing: Oxon

Gelsthorpe, L., Sharpe, G. and Roberts, J. (2007) *Provision for Women Offenders in the Community.* London: The Fawcett Society

Gelsthorpe, L. (2011) "Working with women offenders in the community: A view from England and Wales" in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter, *Working with*

Women Offenders in the Community. (p. 127-150). Willan Publishing: Oxon

Gelsthorpe, L. and Hedderman, C. (2012). 'Providing for women offenders: The risks of adopting a payment by results approach. *Probation Journal,* 59 (4) pp.347-90

Giallombardo, R. (1966). *Society of women: A study of a women's prison.* New York: John Wiley.

Gillies, V. (2003). *Family and Intimate Relationships: A Review of the Sociological Research.* London: South Bank University

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Giordano, P. C., Cernkovick, S. A., and Rudolph, K. L. (2002) 'Gender, crime, and desistance: Towards a theory of cognitive transformation'. *American Journal of Sociology,* 107 (4) 990-1064

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory.* New York: Aldine de Gruyter

Golladay, K. and Holtfreter, K. (2014) 'The Impact of Feminist Pathways Research on Gender-Responsive Policy and Practice'. *Feminist Criminology* 9(3): 191-207

Graham, J. and Bowling, B. (1995) *Young People and Crime.* London: Home Office

Granfield, R. and Cloud, W. (1999) *Coming clean: Overcoming addiction without treatment.* New York: New York University Press

Granville, G. (2009) *An Evaluation of the Salford Together Women Project.* http://www.salfordfoundation.org.uk/downloads/finaltwpreport(2)-154126.pdf [accessed: 14/04/2014]

Halsey, M., Armstrong, R. and Wright, S. (2016). ''F*ck It!': Matza and the Mood of Fatalism in the Desistance Process'. *British Journal of Criminology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.1-20

Hammersley, M. (1979) *Data collection in ethnographic research.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hammersley, M. (1992) "On Feminist Methodology". *Sociology* 26(2):187-206.

Hanham, J. and Tracey, D. (2017). 'Evolution of Mentoring Relationships Involving Young Male Offenders Transitioning from a Juvenile Justice Centre to the Community'. *Youth Justice.* 17(2) pp. 116-133

Hannah-Moffat, K. (1995). 'Feminine Fortresses" Women-Centered Prisons?' *The Prison Journal.* 75. pp.135-164

Hannah-Moffat, K. and Shaw, M. (2003). 'The meaning of 'risk' in women's prisons: A critique.' in B. Bloom (ed.) *Gendered Justice: Addressing female offenders.* Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. pp.69-96

Harding, S. (1987) *Feminism and Methodology.* Bloomingdon: Indiana University Press

Hedderman, C. (2004) 'The 'Criminogenic' Needs of Women Offenders', in G. McIvor (ed) *Women Who Offend* (p. 227- 244*).* London: Jessica Kingsley

Hertz, R. (Ed.). (1997) *Reflexivity and voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2004) *Report on an Unannounced Inspection of HMP Lowdham Grange* 1-3 March 2004- London: Home Office.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2016). *Life in prison: Peer support, a findings paper.* London: HMIP

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2016). *Report on an inspection of HMP & YOI Bronzefield 15-20 November 2015.* London: HMIP

Hollin, C. and Palmer, E. (2006) "Criminogenic Need and Women Offenders: A Critique of the Literature", in *Legal and Criminological Psychology* 11: 179-95

Hudson, B. (2000) "Experiencing Criminological Research" in Jupp, V., Davies, P. and Francis, P. *Doing Criminological Research* (p. 175-192) London: Sage Publications

Israel, M. and Gelsthorpe, L. (2017) 'Ethics in Criminological Research: A Powerful Force, or a Force for the Powerful?' *Research Ethics in Criminology.* Cowburn, M. Gelsthorpe, L. and Wahidin, A. (eds.) (pp-) Oxon: Routledge

Jewkes, Y. (2002) *Captive Audience: Media, Masculinity and Power in Prison.* London: Routledge

Jewkes, Y. and Wright, S. (2016) 'Researching the prison'. Y. Jewkes, B. Crewe, and J. Bennet (eds), *The Handbook of Prisons.* (2nd ed.): 659

Jolliffe, D. and Farrington, P. (2008*) A rapid evidence assessment of the influence of mentoring on reoffending: a summary*. London: Home Office

Jones, S. (1985) "Depth Interviewing" from Walker, R (ed.), *Applied Qualitative Research, (pp-)*Aldershot: Gower

Kaiser, K. (2009) "Protecting Respondent Confidentiality in Qualitative Research". in *Qualitative Health Research.* 19(11):1632-1641

Kaplan A. G., (1984) *The "self in relation": Implications for depression in women* (Publication No. 14) Wellesley, MA: Stone Center

Kavanagh, L. and Borrill, J., (2013), 'Exploring the experiences of ex-offender mentors', in *Probation Journal,* 60(4): 400-414

Keller, T. E. (2005). 'The stages and development of mentoring relationships'. D.L. DuBois and M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (82-99). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kerrison, E. M., Bachman, R. and Paternoster, R. (2016). 'The Effects of Age at Prison Release on Women's Desistance Trajectories: a Mixed-Method Analysis'. *Journal*

of Developmental Life Course Criminology. Springer International Publishing

Kirby, A., Sweeney, T., Turnbull, P. and Bhardwa, B. (2011) *Engaging substance misusing offenders: A rapid review of the substance misuse treatment literature.* Institute for Criminal Policy Research.

Knapp, L. M., Alberda, D. L., Oosterveld, P. and Bhorn, M. Ph. (2012). 'The Predictive Validity of Criminogenic Needs for Male and Female Offenders: Comparing the Relative Impact of Needs in Predicting Recidivism'. *Law and Human Behaviour.* Vol. 36, No. 5, 413-422

Laslett, B. and Rapoport, R. (1975) "Collaborative Interviewing and Interactive Research". *Journal of Marriage and Family.* Vol. 37(4): 968-77

Laub, J. H. and Sampson, R. J. (2003) *Shared beginnings, divergent lives: Delinquent boys to age 70.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

LeBel, T.P., Burnett, R., Maruna, S. and Bushway, S. (2008). 'The 'Chicken and Egg' of Subjective and Social Factors in Desistance from Crime'. *European Journal of Criminology.* Vol 5. pp. 132-159

Leverentz, A., M. (2006) *People, Places, and Things: The Social Process of Reentry for Female Ex-Offenders.*

Lewis, S., Maguire, M., Raynor, P., Vanstone, M. and Vennard, J. (2007) "What works in resettlement? Findings from seven Pathfinders for short-term prisoners in England and Wales". *Criminology and Criminal Justice.* 14(2)

Liebling, A. (Assisted by H. Arnold) (2004) *Prisons and Their Moral Performance: A Study of Values, Quality and Prison Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Liebling, A; with Tait, S., Durie, L., Stiles, A. and Harvey, J. (2005). 'Safer Locals Evaluation'. *Prison Service Journal.* 162.

Light, M., Grant, E., and Hopkins, K. (2013). *Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners.* London: Ministry of Justice

Loucks, N., Malloch, M., McIvor, G. and Gelsthorpe, L. (2006). 'Evaluation of the 218 Centre'. *Crime and Criminal Justice, Social Research.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Justice Department

Lutze, F. E. (2003). 'Ultramasculine stereotypes and violence in the control of women inmates'. In B. H. Zaitzow and J. Thomas (eds.) *Women in Prison: Gender and social control.* London: Lynne Reinner Publishers 3

McIvor, G., Murray, C. and Jamieson, J. (2004). 'Desistance from crime: is it different for women and girls?' S. Maruna, R. Immarigeon (eds). *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration.* Devon: Willan Publishing

McNeill, F. (2009) *Towards Effective Practice in Offender Supervision.* The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

McNeill, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives? Desistance Research and Offender Management.* Glasgow School of Social Work and Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, University of Glasgow and Strathcylde

Mageehon, A. (2008) 'Caught Up in the System: How Women Who Have Been Incarcerated Negotiate Power'. (pp.473-492). *The Prison Journal.* Vol.88(4).

Mahoney, A.M. and C.A. Daniel. 2006. Bridging the power gap: Narrative therapy with incarcerated women. *The Prison Journal*, 86(1):75-88.

Mairs, A. and Tolland, H. "A Ray of Light? Women Offenders, Mentoring and Desistance" in F. McNeill (ed) *Scottish Justice Matters*. (pp.17-19) SCCCJ: Scotland

Marshall, C. and Young, M. D. (2006) "Gender and Methodology" in *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Education.* (pp.63-78). SAGE Publications

Martin, J., Kautt, P. and Gelsthorpe, L. (2009) 'What Works for Women?: A Comparison of Community-Based General Offending Programme Completion'. *The British Journal of Criminology.* Vol. 49 (6) pp. 879-899

Maruna, S. (1997). 'Desistance and Development: The Psychosocial Process of 'Going Straight'.

Maruna, S. (2001). *Making Good.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

Maruna, S. and Farrall, S. (2004). 'Desistance from crime: a theoretical reformation' *Kolner Zeitschrift fur Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie.* 43: 171–94.

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching*. (2nd ed), London: Sage

May, T. (2011). *Social Research: issues, methods and process (*4th ed). England: Open University Press

Megginson, D., & Clutterbuck, D. (1995). *Mentoring in action: A practical guide for managers*. London: Kogan Page.

McNeill, F., Farrall, S., Lightowler, C. and Maruna, S. (2012). *How and why people stop offending: Discovering desistance.* IRISS Insights, no.15

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (2011). *What is mentoring and befriending?* MBF Funding Survey Report. accessed at www.mandbf.org.uk

Miller, J. B. (1976). *Toward a new psychology of women.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Miller, J. M. and Tewksbury, R. (2001). *Extreme methods: Innovative approaches to social science research.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon

Miller, N., and Najavits, M. (2012). 'Creating trauma-informed correctional care: a balance of goals and environment.' *European Journal of Psychotraumatology.*

pp.1-8

Ministry of Justice (2009) *Short Study on Women Offenders.* London: Social Exclusion Task Force

Ministry of Justice (2012). *Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds.* London: Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Justice (2013a). *Mentoring Scheme reduces reoffending.* (Press Release). London, United Kingdom: Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Justice (2013b) *Transforming Rehabilitation. A Strategy for Reform.* London, United Kingdom: Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Justice (2016a). *Prison Safety and Reform.* London: Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Justice (2016b). *Offender Management Statistics quarterly: April to June 2016.* London: Ministry of Justice.

Morash, M., Bynum, T. S., and Koons, B. A. (1998). 'Women Offenders: Programming Needs and Promising Approaches'. *National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief.* United States: US Department of Justice

National Offender Management Service (2012). *Commissioning Intentions 2013-2014 Discussion Document.* http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/noms/commissioning-intentions-2013-14.pdf

Newburn, T. and Shiner, M. (2005). *Dealing with Disaffection: Young People, Mentoring and Social Inclusion*. Cullompton: Willan

Oppenheim, A. N. (1979). *Methods and Strategies of Social Research.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Opsal, T. (2012). ''Livin' on the Straights': Identity, Desistance and Work among Women Post-incarceration'. *Sociological Inquiry.* 82(3) 378-403

Oser, C., Knudsen, H., Staton-Tindall, M. and Leukefeld, C. (2009). 'The Adoption of Wraparound Services among Substance Abuse Treatment Organisations Serving Criminal Offenders: The Role of a Women-Specific Program'. *Drug and Alcoholo Dependency.* vol. 1(103) accessed at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2784607/

Owen, B. (1998). *In the mix: Struggle and survival in a women's prison.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Paget, M. A. (1981) "The ontological anguish of women artists" in *The New England Sociologist.* 3: 65-70

Parker, B. & Ulrich, Y. (1990). "A protocol of safety: research on abuse of women". *Nursing Research, 39*(4), 248-249.

Parkin, S. and McKeganey, N. (2000) 'The Rise and Rise of Peer Education Approaches'. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy.* Vol.7(3): 293-310

Patenaude, L. (2004) 'No Promises, But I'm Willing to Listen and Tell What I Hear: Conducting Qualitative Research among Prison Inmates and Staff'. *The Prison Journal*. Vol. 84(4): 69S-91S

Paternoster, R. and Bushway, S. (2009). 'Desistance and the 'feared self': toward an identity theory of criminal desistance'. *Journal of Law and Criminology.* 99, 4: 1103-56

Pawson, R. (2004) *Mentoring relationships: an explanatory review.* ESRC UK Center for Evidence Based Policy and Practice: Working Paper 21.

Pardue, A., Arrigo, B., A. and Murphy, D. S. (2011) 'Sex and Sexuality in Women's Prisons: A Preliminary Typological Investigation'. *The Prison Journal.* 91(3) pp.279-304

Perrin, C. and Blagden, N. (2014). 'Accumulating meaning, a purpose and opportunities to change 'drip by drip: the impact of being a listener in prison'. *Journal of Psychology, Crime and Law.* Vol. 20 (9) pp.902-20

Plechowicz, L. (2015) 'Women's centre's in J. Annison, J. Brayford and J. Deering (eds) *Women and Criminal Justice: From the Corston Report to Transforming Rehabilitation.* Bristol: Policy Press

Pollock, J. M. (1998) *Counselling women in prison.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Potter, H. (2013) "Intersectional Criminology: Interrogating Identity and Power in Criminological Research and Theory". *Critical Criminology.* 21(3) pp. 305-318

Prison Reform Trust (2010) *Women in Prison*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

Prison Reform Trust. (2014) *The Bromley Briefings – Prison: The Facts.* The Prison Reform Trust, London.

Pryor, S. (2001). *The Responsible Prisoner: An Exploration of the Extent to which Imprisonment Removes Responsibility Unnecessarily and and Invitation to Change.* London: Home Office

Radcliffe, P., Hunter, P. and Vass, R. (2013). *The development and impact of community services for women offenders: an evaluation.* London: The Institute for Criminal Policy Research.

Radcliffe, P., and Hunter, G. (2015). ''It was a safe place for me to be': Accounts of attending women's community services and moving beyond the offender identity'. *British Journal of Criminology.* vol 56 (5) pp. 976-994

Ragins, B., R. (1997). 'Diversified Mentoring Relationships in Organisations: A Power Perspective'. *The Academy of Management Review,* Vol. 22, (2) pp.482-521

Read, E., M. (1996). *Partners in Change: The Twelve Step Referral Handbook for Probation, Parole and Community Corrections.* Minnesota: Hazeldean

Reform Justice (2012). *Joined-up justice: Integrating the criminal justice system.* London:

Reform Justice

Reich, M. (1995). "The Mentor Connection" in T. Kerry and A. S. Mayes (eds) *Issues in Mentoring*. London: The Open University Press

Reisig, H., T. and Sprecher, S. (eds). (2009). *Encyclopaedia of human relationships* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Reisig, M., Holtfreter, K. and Morash, M. (2002). 'Social capital among women offenders: Examining the distribution of social networks and resources'. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice.* 18:167-187

Rhodes, J. (2002). *Research Corner: Making Mentoring Work.* University of Massachusetts, Boston: National Mentoring Partnership

Rhodes, J. (2005). *Research Corner: Spanning the Gender Gap in Mentoring.* University of Massachusetts, Boston: National Mentoring Partnership

Rhodes, J. (2007) "Fostering Close and Effective Relationships in Youth Mentoring Programs" in *Research in Action*, Issue 4. MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership: http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_385.pdf [accessed: 17/12/2013]

Ribbens, J. (1989) "Interviewing- An 'Unnatural Situation'?" in *Women's Studies Int. Forum.* Vol.12 (6): 579-592

Richie, B. (1996). *The gendered entrapment of battered, black women.* London: Routledge

Riley, S., Schouten, W. and Cahil, S. (2003). "Exploring the Dynamics of Subjectivity and Power Between Researcher and Researched." *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research,* 4(2), Art. 40

Roberts, H. (1981) "Women and their doctors", Roberts, H. (ed) *Doing Feminist Research.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Roberts, J. (2010). 'Women offenders: more troubled than troublesome?' J. Braydorf, F. B. Cowe, and J. Deering (eds). *What Else Works? Creative work with offenders* (p. 991-117) Oxon: Willan Publishing

Rumgay, J (2004) "Scripts for Safer Survival: Pathways Out of Female Crime" in *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice. 43: 405-419.*

Sacro (2013) *Outcomes for women who are supported in Sacro's mentoring services: Glasgow, Fife, Edinburgh and Lanarkshire.* http://www.sacro.org.uk

Salgado, D. M., Fox, J., B. and Quinlan, K., J. (2010) "Community mentoring in the United States: An evaluation of the Rhode Island Women's Mentoring Programme" in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter (eds.), *Working with Women Offenders in the Community*. (p.279- 298) illan Publishing: Oxon

Sampson, R. J. and Laub, J. (1993) *Crime in the making: Pathways and turning points through life.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Schwartz, J. and Steffensmeier, D. (2008) "The Nature of Female Offending: Patterns and Explanations". R. T. Zaplin (ed.). *Female Offenders: Critical Perspectives and Effective Interventions.* (2nd ed.): 43-75

Shaw, J., Appleby, L., Baker, D., Hunt, I. and Moloney, A. (2004). 'Suicide by prisoners: National clinical survey'. *British Journal of Psychiatry.* 184: 263-267

Shields, S. A. (2008) "Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective" in *Sex Roles.* 59: 301-331.

Simpson, R. (2006) 'The Intimate Relationships of Contemporary Spinsters' in *Sociological Research Online* vol.11(3)

Smart, C. (1976) *Women, crime and criminology: a feminist critique.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Smith, D. (1974) "Women's Perspectives as a Radical Critique of Sociology', *Sociological Enquiry,* vol.44 (1): 7-13

Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners. London: Home Office

South, J., Bagnall, A., Hulme, C., Woodall, J., Longo, R., Dixey, R., Kinsella, K., Raine, G., Vinall, K. and Wright, J. (2014), '*A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of peer-based interventions to maintain and improve offender health in prison settings'.* Health Services and Delivery Research, 2.

South, J., Bagnall, A., Hulme, C., Woodall, J., Longo, R., Dixey, R., Kinsella, K., Raine, G., Rooke, S., Vinall-Collier, K. and Wright, J. (2015). *Peers in Prison Settings.* Research Briefing.

Stacey, J. (1988) "Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography"? in *Women's Studies Int. Forum.* Vol. 11(1): 21-27

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1983) "Feminist Theory and Survey Research" in *Feminist Measures in Survey Research.* Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1983). *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge

Steffensmeier D. and Allan, E. (1996) 'Gender and Crime: Toward a Gendered Theory of Female Offending' in *Annual Review of Sociology* 22: 459-87

Steffensmeier, D. and Allan, E. (1998) "The Nature of Female Offending: Patterns and Explanations". R. T. Zaplin (ed.) *Female Offenders: Critical Perspectives and Effective Interventions.* Maryland: Aspen Publishers

Steiner, B. and Wooldredge, J. (2009) 'Rethinking the link between institutional crowding and inmate misconduct'. *The Prison Journal.* 89: 205-233

Steiner, B. and Wooldredge, J. (2014) 'Comparing self-report to official measures of inmate misconduct. *Justice Quarterly.* 31: 1074-1101

Stevens, A. (2015) ''Serious therapy' for serious female offenders: the democratic therapeutic community at HMP Send'. (pp.173-188). J. Annison, J. Brayford, J. Deering (eds.) *Women and Criminal Justice: From the Corston Report to Transforming Rehabilitation.*

Strauss, A. L. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Talbot, M. (2000). 'Ethical issues in guidance and counselling in medical education: conflicts in a learner-centred approach and a hermeneutic resolution'. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling,* 28(1) 125-134

Topping, K. and Ehly, S. (1998) *Peer-assisted Learning.* Taylor and Francis

Tracy, S. J. (2013) *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact.* West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing

Tracy, K., and Wallace, S. P. (2016). Benefits of peer support groups in the treatment of addiction. *Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation.* 7. p.143-154

Trotter, C. (2011) "Mentoring", in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter, *Working with Women Offenders in the Community.* (p.261-279). Willan Publishing: Oxon

Trotter, C., McIvor, G. and Sheehan, R. (2012) 'The Effectiveness of Support and Rehabilitation Services for Women Offenders'. *Australian Social Work.* Vol.65(1): 6-20

Turner, G., and Shepherd, J. (1999) 'A method in search of a theory: peer education and health promotion.' *Health Education Research.* 14(2): 235-247

Tolan, P., Henry, D., Schoeny, M. and Bass, A. (2008) 'Mentoring Interventions to Affect Juvenile Delinquency and Associated Problems'. *Campbell Systematic Reviews.* 16.

Van Olphen, J., Eliason, M. J., Freudenberg, N., & Barnes, M. (2009). 'Nowhere to go: How stigma limits the options of female drug users after release from jail.' *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, *4*, 10. http://doi.org/10.1186/1747-597X-4-10

Van Voorhis, P., Wright, E. M., Salisbury, E. and Bauman, A. (2010) "Women's Risk Factors and Their Contributions to Existing Risk/Needs Assessment: The Current Status of a Gender-Responsive Supplement" in *Criminal Justice Behaviour.* http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/womenoffenders/docs/CJBpercent202010.pdf

Van Wormer, K. (2010) Working With Female Offenders: A Gender-Sensitive Approach. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010

Weaver, B. (2013) "The Importance of Personal Relations in Social Change" in F. McNeill (ed) *Scottish Justice Matters.* vol. 1 (2) www.scottishjusticematters.com [accessed: 12/12/2013]

Ward, D. A. and Kassebaum, G. G. (1965). *Women's prison: Sex and social structure.* Chicago: Aldine

Weaver, B. and McNeill (2007) *Giving Up Crime: Directions for Policy.* Glasgow: Glasgow School of Social Work and Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research.

Weaver, B. (2013). "The Importance of Personal Relations in Social Change" in F. McNeill (ed) *Scottish Justice Matters.* vol. 1 (2)

Westmarland, N. (2001). "The Quantitative/Qualitative Debate and Feminist Research: A Subjective View of Objectivity" in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* vol. 2(1). ISSN 1438-5627

Wheatley, M. (2007). 'Drugs in Prison' in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on prisons.* (pp.399-422) Cullompton: Willan Publishing

Wise, S. (1987). "A framework for discussing ethical issues in feminist research: A review of the literature". In *Writing feminist biography 2: Using life histories.* (pp.47-88). Studies in Sexual Politics, No. 19, Department of Sociology, University of Manchester

Women's Prison Association (2008) 'Addressing women's incarceration: a national survey of state commissions and task forces on women in the criminal justice system.' *Institution on Women and Criminal Justice Report.*

Wooldridge, J. and Steiner, B. (2016) *Justice Quarterly.* Vol.33(2): 209-238

Woodall, J., South, J., Dixey, R., de Viggiani, N. and Penson, W. (2015). 'Expert views of peer-based interventions for prisoner health'. *International Journal of Prisoner Health.* Vol. 11(2). pp. 87-97.

Worrall, A. (2003). 'What Works' and community sentences for women offenders. *Crime and Justice.* No.53. 40-43

Worrall, A. and Gelsthorpe, L. (2009). ''What work' with women offenders: The past 30 years. *Probation Journal.* Vol. 56. pp. 329-345

Wright, E. M., DeHart, D. D., Koons-Witt, B. A. and Crittenden, C. A., (2012) ''Buffers' against crime? Exploring the roles and limitations of positive relationship among women in prison'. *Punishment and Society.* 15(1): 71-95

Wright, E. M., Salisbury, E. J., and Van Voorhis, P. (2007). 'Predicting the prison misconducts of women offenders; The importance of gender-responsive needs'. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Jusitce.* Vol. 23(4): 310-340

Wyse, J. J. B., Harding, D. J., and Morenoff, J. D. (2014). 'Romantic relationships and criminal desistance: pathways and processes.' *Sociological Forum.* 29(2) : 365-385

Zaplin, R. T. (1998) *Female Offenders: Critical Perspectives and Effective Interventions.* Maryland: Aspen Publishers

APPENDIX I: INFORMATION SHEET FOR MENTORS/MENTEES IN PRISON

Information Sheet for Research Participants - Peer Mentoring

Title of Project: Exploring Mentoring Programmes and Different Forms of Peer Support for Female Offenders: A Qualitative Study in Prison and the Community'

Project Supervisor: Professor Rosie Meek

I am currently researching at Royal Holloway, University of London, looking at the experiences of women who have been involved in peer mentoring programs whilst in prison. In order to do this I would like to get your views and experiences of taking part in a peer mentoring programme at HMP/YOI Bronzefield.

Participating in the study

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- All participant details will remain confidential. All names, places or any other identifying information will be anonymised to uphold security and privacy
- If you discuss something that concerns your wellbeing, or that of another prisoner, or if you disclose information about a previously undisclosed offence I am obligated to inform a member of prison staff
- You can refuse to answer any questions if you would rather not and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason (this will not affect your status in the prison or your participation in the mentoring programme)
- Your signed consent form will be stored separately from your responses to ensure confidentiality

You may keep this information sheet for reference or to contact me in writing at:

M. Henderson,
Royal Holloway University of London,
Arts Building
Egham, Surrey,
TW20 0EX

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

APPENDIX II: CONSENT FORM FOR PEER MENTORS AND MENTEES

Peer Mentoring in Prison: Consent Form

Please circle your answer:

- I have read the information sheet about this study YES / NO
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions YES / NO
- I have received satisfactory answers to any questions YES / NO
- I understand I am free to withdraw from the study, at any point and without a reason YES / NO
- I agree to take part in the study YES / NO
- I agree to notes being taken during the interview (all answers will be anonymised – names will not be included) YES / NO

Signed: ……

Name (Print): ……

Date: ……

NB: This consent form will be stored separately from the responses you provide to ensure confidentiality

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – PEER MENTORING IN PRISON

Research Interview Schedule: Mentees in Prison

Introduction to the interview:

1. Could you tell me your age and when you first entered Bronzefield?

2. How long have you been/where you involved in Bronzefield's peer mentoring program?
   (-do you have any experience of peer mentoring in another prison?)

3. Where does a typical mentoring session take place?

4. How long does a typical mentoring session last?

5. How much longer do you have left with your mentor/ how long did your mentoring program last?

Could you talk to me about your experiences of mentoring…

6. How did you become involved with a mentoring program at Bronzefield?

7. Why did you want to be mentored?

8. What did you know about mentoring before being involved in the program?

9. What goals or aims do you hope to/ have you achieve(d) with your mentor?

10. What kind of support did your mentor provided you with?
    (prompt if needed – help with day to day life/ work in the classrooms etc)

11. How useful/not useful have you found this support?

12. What do you usually do during a typical peer mentoring session?
    - How useful/ not useful were these activities?

13. How do you think peer mentoring can influence your life?
    - If it can't – why not?

Thinking about the mentoring relationship in particular…

14. How would you describe your relationship with your peer mentor?
    - How would you say your relationship with your mentor developed?

15. Is it important to develop a close relationship with your mentor?
    - Why? / Why not?

16. How did the mentoring relationship end? / Do you know how the relationship will end?
    - Are you still able to contact your mentor after this point?

17. What have you enjoyed the most about the mentoring program at this prison?

18. What have you not enjoyed?

19. What would you change about the mentoring programme if you could change anything?

20. Would you recommend peer mentoring to other women in prison?
    - Why / why not?

APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PEER MENTORS IN PRISON

Background information to mentoring:

1. How long have you been a peer mentor?
2. Why did you decide to become/how did you become a peer mentor?
3. How many women are you currently mentoring?
4. What kind of training do you receive in order to mentor women?
5. Do you receive any kind of support whilst mentoring?

The experience of peer mentoring:

6. How is a peer mentor typically 'matched' to each woman?
7. How would you say women can benefit most from mentoring?
8. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of mentoring?
9. What personal qualities do you think are important to be an effective mentor?
10. On average, how long do you act as a mentor for each woman?
11. How frequently do you meet with each woman?
12. How long does each mentor session usually last?
13. Where does a typical mentor session take place?
14. Do you ever conduct group mentoring sessions?
    - If yes, how many women are usually in each group?
    - How does this form of mentoring differ from individual sessions?
15. In your experience, how can mentoring help women in prison?
16. Are there any aspects of mentoring, in your opinion, which make it particularly beneficial for women?
17. Have you ever experienced any challenges or set-backs when mentoring?
18. What, in your opinion, are the most enjoyable aspects of mentoring?
19. What are the least enjoyable, or most difficult, aspects?

The mentoring relationship

20. You mentioned your mentoring partnership with (X), what kind of relationship would describe it to be?
21. Is it important to develop a close relationship to the mentee?
    - If not, why not?

22. Are there any potential obstacles to developing a mentoring relationship? (prompt - attitude / Limitations on visiting hours/ access)

23. Does the type of relationship you have with your mentee(s) have any negative aspects?

24. How do mentoring partnerships typically end?
    - Are women still able to contact you after this point?

APPENDIX V: HMP/YOI BRONZEFIELD PEER SUPPORT WORKER APPLICATION FORM

Peer Support Worker References

Helping Bronzefield go from Good to Great

Please provide references and any evidence to support your application to become a Peer Support Worker. Include any skills that would be specific to the role, gained either in or out of custody.

Prison Name	Prison Number

In your own words explain why you want to be a Peer Support Worker?

.....
.....
.....
.....

What roles interest you and why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

What skills could you bring to the role?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Do you have previous experience working in a supporting role? If yes please elaborate.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Have you any qualifications/training, gained outside or whilst in custody?

Qualifications/ Training:	Date completed:	Level:

Please provide the following references, two from different departments for example; this could be from your personal support officer and your current employer. The third reference from your OMU caseworker. If you are apply for a recovery position please request for the fourth reference to be completed.

Reference 1:

Name: ……

Dept & Position: …….

……
……
……
……
……
……

Reference 2:

Name: …….

Dept & Position: …….

……
……
……
……
……
……

Reference 3: OMU Caseworker (Engaging with sentence plan?)

Name: ……..

……
……
……
……
……
……

Reference 4: Recovery Reference: (only applicable if applying for a recovery position)

Name: ……..

……
……
……
……
……
……

Staff: Please explain why you believe this resident would be suitable for the role of Peer Support Worker. For example, willing to help others, skills etc?

APPENDIX VI: EXAMPLE INFORMATION SHEET FOR COMMUNITY MENTORS

Information Sheet for Research Participants - Mentors

School of Law
Royal Holloway, University of London

Researcher: Melissa Henderson,
School of Law, Royal Holloway, University of London

Supervisor: Professor Rosie Meek
School of Law, Royal Holloway, University of London

1. Title of Project: 'Exploring Mentoring Programmes and Different Forms of Peer Support for Female Offenders: A Qualitative Study in Prison and the Community'

2. Purpose of Project:

This research will form 'Phase 2' of the final project, which aims to explore mentoring services as a form of rehabilitation for women in the criminal justice system. The research looks to assess how effectively mentoring is able to address female criminogenic need and its influence on desistance. In particular, the study will focus specifically on examining the relationship between mentor and mentee, looking at what kind of relationship is formed and whether it has an impact on women's ability to desist from crime.

Prior to conducting interviews with female service users, the research will be piloted with women working as volunteer mentors or employed in mentoring organisations. This 'Phase 2' of the study looks to interview volunteer or employed mentors to explore mentoring as an innovative rehabilitative practice for female offenders. By conducting this preliminary research with mentors, a more developed understanding of mentoring practices and procedures can be obtained prior to engaging with service users. The studies aims are as follows;

- To assess the process and practices of mentoring female offenders and the ways in which it addresses female criminogenic needs
- To examine the relationship, if any, that is created between mentor and female offender
- To ultimately develop an understanding of how mentoring programmes are conducted: to identify and analyse the varying outcomes of mentoring (both from mentoring services in the community and peer mentoring programmes in prison) and the key aspects necessary for successful practice

3. Participating in the study:

You will be invited to take part in a one-to-one interview about your opinions and experiences working with women in the criminal justice system. The interview will last approx. 30 – 40 minutes and will take place either within your organisation or other agreed upon location.

- Participation in the study is entirely **voluntary** and all participants are able to stop the interview at any point
- Participants are able to withdraw their participation in the project up to 1 month after taking part in the interview
- Participants can choose not to answer any questions at any stage
- The information collected will be **confidential** and all participants and any personal details will remain anonymous

Contact information:

Melissa.henderson.2013@live.rhul.ac.uk
Royal Holloway, University of London

Thank you for participating!

APPENDIX VII: COMMUNITY MENTOR CONSENT FORM

Consent Form – Community Mentors

Name of study: 'Exploring Mentoring Programmes and Different Forms of Peer Support for Female Offenders: A Qualitative Study in Prison and the Community'

Researcher: Melissa Henderson, Royal Holloway University of London

Please circle your answer:

- I have read the information sheet about this study YES / NO
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions YES / NO
- I have received satisfactory answers to any questions YES / NO
- I understand I am free to withdraw from the study, at any point and without a reason YES / NO
- I agree to take part in the study YES / NO
- I agree to notes being taken during the interview (all answers will be anonymised – names will not be included) YES / NO

Signed: ……

Name: ……

Date: ……

NB: This consent form will be stored separately from the responses you provide to ensure confidentiality

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY MENTOR INTERVIEWS

Research Interview – Phase 2: Community Mentor Interview

Interview Questions

Background information to mentoring

1. How long have you been a mentor?
2. Why did you decide to become a mentor?
3. Have you ever received any form of mentoring yourself?
4. How many women are you currently mentoring?
5. What kind of training do you receive in order to mentor women?
6. Do you receive any kind of support whilst mentoring?

The experience of mentoring

7. How is a mentor typically 'matched' to each woman?
   - Are you able to request to mentor, or not mentor, certain types of offenders?
   - Do women have any influence on the mentors they are matched with?
8. How would you say women can benefit most from mentoring?
9. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of mentoring?
10. What personal qualities would you say are important in order to be an effective mentor?
11. On average, how long do you act as a mentor for each woman?
12. How frequently do you meet with each woman?
13. How long does each mentor session usually last?
14. Where does a typical mentor session take place?
15. Is all mentoring conducted face-to-face?
    -If no, do you ever communicate via emails/ phone calls?
16. Do you ever conduct group mentoring sessions?
    - If yes, how many women are usually in each group?
    - How does this form of mentoring differ from individual sessions?

17. In your experience, how can mentoring help offenders?

18. Are there any aspects of mentoring which make it particularly beneficial for female offenders?

19. It is important for women to be mentored by other women?

20. How, in your opinion or experience, can mentoring assist with long-term desistance from offending?

21. What, if any, targets or indicators do you have to measure mentoring performance?

22. Have you ever experienced any challenges or set-backs when mentoring?

23. What, in your opinion, are the most enjoyable aspects of mentoring?

24. What are the least enjoyable, or most difficult, aspects?

The mentoring relationship

25. You mentioned your mentoring partnership with (X), what kind of relationship would describe it to be? (formal/ role-model/ mother/ sister role/ none)

26. Is it important is it to develop a close relationship to the mentee?
    - If not, why not?

27. Are there any potential obstacles when developing a mentoring relationship?
    - Offenders attitude?
    - Limitations on visiting hours/ access?

28. Does the type of relationship you have with your mentee(s) have any negative aspects?

29. How do mentoring partnerships typically end?
    - Is there a formal end to contact?
    - Are women still able to contact you after this point?